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Families, pensions, children, jobs, homes, enterprise, cars, taxation

## Budget 99 12 PAGE SPECIAL

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# Showman Brown's 22p shock

More for pensioners  
and families: petrol,  
tobacco and Miras hit

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND ALASDAIR MURRAY

GORDON BROWN pulled a £4 billion tax surprise out of the hat yesterday with a cut in the basic rate of income tax to 22p next year — its lowest level for 70 years — and the immediate introduction of the long-promised 10p starting rate.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, delighted, Labour MPs with a spend-and-tax-cut package that had all the hallmarks of a pre-election Budget at least two years before Tony Blair has to go to the polls. And for Mr Brown, revealing his role as showman, the budget cut was "the biggest Budget secret for years".

The biggest gainers were families and the elderly, as he announced above-inflation increases in child benefit and a five-fold increase in the £20 allowance to help pensioners through the winter.

But the headline giveaways in direct tax were balanced by squeezes elsewhere, with the outright abolition next year of the remaining 10 per cent of mortgage interest tax relief; the scrapping of the married couple's allowance, to be replaced by a new tax credit for children which will go only to



Hague to accuse him of being the "pickpocket Chancellor who shakes your hand with a smile after he has stealthily removed your wallet".

Even so, Conservative MPs were as stunned by their Labour colleagues by a combination of tax cuts and help for enterprise that could easily have come from a Tory Chancellor. They included a series of measures to help business, including slashing the main corporation tax rate on company profits from 31p to 30p and the rate for small companies to 20p from this April, another penny cut.

Senior Treasury sources hailed the Budget as the most radical for decades because of its tax reforms, and the Treasury claimed last night that 20 million of Britain's 26 million households would be better off at the end of three years as a result of the Budget. The losers include the better-off, particularly home-buyers without children.

Mr Brown also announced another £1 billion for the public services, including £500 million for health, most of which will be used to upgrade casualty units, and £170 million for crime prevention.

The measures were part of a £6 billion boost to the economy made possible after Mr Brown found that he had another £10 billion to play with compared with last year's Comprehensive Spending Review figures.

Although revenue was £8 billion down, much of it because of tobacco smuggling and the drop in oil prices, spending was £18 billion lower than expected for the next three years — £9 billion of that thanks to lower spending on social security and £4 billion due to lower debt interest payments.

The Chancellor decided to use £4 billion of that extra cash to cut borrowing, a similar amount on tax cuts and £2 billion on extra public spending.

In spite of the handouts Mr Brown was keen to reassure the markets that he was not taking risks — and the Conservatives were swift to point out that the overall tax burden is likely to be higher than when Labour came to power — but there were fears in the City that the Chancellor's ap-



PETER NICHOLLS

Who wins,  
who loses?

The Times jury  
gives its verdict

By SUSIE STEINER

THE losers were, as you would expect, disappointed. But most of the Times Budget '99 jury were winners — and many were astonished.

*The Times* brought together more than a dozen men, women and children to discover the effect of the Chancellor's work yesterday on the wider British public.

While the group watched Gordon Brown detail his changes in the Commons, a team of accountants were on hand to calculate the impact on their bank balances. The results were unexpected.

Elspeth May, of KPMG, said: "What's interesting is that at first sight this Budget looked as if it was only benefiting people on lower incomes, but if you look at the detail on all the incoming tax changes, the higher rate tax payers come off better. People with children fare better than those without, and the elderly fare best of all."

Violet Newitt, an 83-year-old with a basic state pension, saw her income rise by £600 a year. And the small-businessman, John Brander, saw a pleasing cut in his corporation tax but no reduction in the mountain of paperwork that swamps his art gallery each year.

The verdict, pages 14, 15

- 10p income tax rate on first £1,500 from April 1999
- 1p off basic income tax rate, down to 22p from April 2000
- New children's tax credit to replace married couple's allowance
- Mortgage interest relief (Miras) abolished from April 2000
- Pensioners' winter allowance up from £20 to £100
- Cut of £5 in excise duty for cars with below 1,100 cc engines
- New 10p corporation tax rate for small businesses
- Share ownership scheme for workers to take stake in their firms
- £60-a-week credit for over-50s moving off welfare into jobs
- New energy tax on business from April 2001

- Extra £1.1 billion for schools, hospitals and crime prevention
- Stamp duty up 0.5 per cent on properties over £250,000
- Duty on spirits, beer and wine frozen
- 17.5p on 20 cigarettes, 7.5p on pack of five cigars, 4.25p on litre of leaded and 3.75p on litre of unleaded petrol
- 900,000 taken out of National Insurance by raising thresholds
- Rise in National Insurance for those earning more than £26,000
- New research and development tax credit for small businesses
- Child benefit up to £15 a week for first child, £10 for others, from April 2000
- Company car tax reform

parent generosity might force the Bank of England to call a halt to its rate-cutting spree for fear of fueling a consumer boom.

The pound climbed against both the dollar and the euro with traders concluding that interest rates would stay on hold, and there was also concern that Mr Brown's predictions for economic growth could be too optimistic and that his plans could yet be blown off course.

Ian Peters, deputy director

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of the British Chambers of Commerce, said: "The sting in the tail may be that the Bank of England may have less room to reduce interest rates than we would have wished."

And Ruth Lea, head of policy at the Institute of Directors, said: "It looks a touch generous to me. We wanted to see looser monetary policy and tighter fiscal policy and it looks as if we're getting the opposite."

A failure to cut interest rates would hit manufacturing companies, which are already mired in recession, even harder. John Monks, the TUC General Secretary, said: "I am still very concerned about job losses in the manufacturing sec-

tor, particularly with the high value of the pound against the euro."

The stock market, however,

gave the Budget a warmer reception, closing up 28.9 at 6237.7, some 16 points higher than when the Chancellor stood up. Traders also pointed out that the most surprising cut — the penny off the basic rate of income tax next year — was announced after the markets had closed, and they suggested that retail and other consumer shares may push the market higher today.

Among his other "rabbits", Mr Brown had announced an early boost for the millennium celebrations by freezing duty

Continued on page 2, col 5

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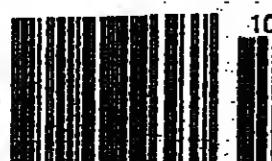
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## Boy doing his homework in class casts a cloud over the prizegiving

William Hague's blue  
scribble said it all. To  
watch the Tory Leader furiously  
reworking his notes as the  
Chancellor spoke was to  
watch desperate rear-guard  
action. Relaxed, almost rakish  
in a star-spangled tie, Gordon  
Brown strode through a Budget  
that sounded more like a  
prizegiving than an audit.

Hunched beside his Shadow  
Chancellor, Mr Hague ex-  
ecuted a high-speed shuffle  
through an untidy sheaf bristling  
with Post-It notes. Every  
time Brown turned a page,  
Hague put his pen through an  
other passage. Sometimes he  
excised whole pages. When  
not deleting he was scribbling  
fit to burst.

The Prime Minister seemed  
bored. Beside his Shadow  
Chancellor, Tony Blair  
looked almost fey. As Brown  
pulled rabbits, tax-cuts, silk  
handkerchiefs, computers  
and hospital wards out of his  
hat — and as excited Labour  
backbenchers squealed — Mr  
Blair showed the strain, star-  
ing tight-faced at the ceiling.

For this was Brown's afternoon: one of the best he has had. After a slow start he tossed in a goodie here, a pleasant surprise there: then a tax break, a university laboratory or a school computer or two. MPs perked up. But the prizes grew. Tax cuts, a 10p starting rate; a halving of vehicle excise duty... Hague was now a whirlwind of insertion and deletion; the benches behind him had fallen silent.

The Chancellor increased  
stamp duty on house-pur-  
chase: "6 per cent of families  
are unaffected," he drawled.  
Peter Mandelson's head sank  
in his hands. Brown quin-  
tupled the pensioners' winter  
bonuses. Labour cheered. Hague  
crossed out a whole page.  
Brown linked pensioners' minimum  
income guarantee to earnings. Government

backbenchers went wild.  
Hague scribbled some more.

This was becoming almost  
festival. It all sounded too  
good to be true. Cheering  
grew as Brown promised to  
reduce the basic rate of income  
tax from 23 to 22 per cent. The  
sharp-minded noticed that he did  
not mention he was removing  
the 20 per cent band.

Now Hague had to speak.  
In his place I would have  
done, sobbing under the  
Clerks Table.

The Opposition Leader's  
response launched from a heap  
of crumpled papers and Post-  
It notes, was feisty, gutsy,  
well-briefed and sharp. Those  
who doubt Hague's resilience  
should note the way he punched  
his way out of a corner.

Such was the violence  
and momentum of his counter-  
attack — stealth-taxes, he  
called them, in a stealth-Budget —  
that many who came to  
cheer the Chancellor stayed  
to scratch their heads.

### INSIDE

## Argentina visit starts

The Prince of Wales arrived  
in Buenos Aires for a three-day  
official visit to Argentina. In  
public speech, he called for a full return to friendship  
between the two countries and  
made no mention of the still-disputed Falkland Islands.

Page 2

Call confidence or bombast,  
but his speech was heavily  
punctuated with laudatory  
references to his own transformation  
of the economic order. Brown  
sat down to an unmodi-  
fied rapture all around him.

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Minister was convicted in the  
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The former Prime Minister,  
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were acquitted.....Page 21

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# Alliance cost me the chance to clear name, says Hamilton



Hamilton: an outcast

By FRANCES GIBB  
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

**PARLIAMENT** and the chairman of Harrods, Mohamed Al Fayed, have joined forces to deny the former MP Neil Hamilton the chance to clear his name of bribery allegations, the Court of Appeal was told yesterday.

Desmond Browne, QC, for Mr Hamilton, said that Mr Al Fayed's allegations — that he bribed him to ask parliamentary questions — had rendered his client an outcast in

public life. "He has lost his career, his reputation, and his wife has lost her job as his secretary," he said.

"On his fiftieth birthday, he is effectively unemployable, and without access to the courts he has no hope of salvaging his career. Yet it would seem that Parliament and Mr Al Fayed have got together to deny him the right to come to this court — a constitutional right as old as Magna Carta."

Mr Browne was addressing Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, sitting with Lords Justice

Laws and Hirst, on the second day of an appeal by Mr Al Fayed. Mr Al Fayed is contesting a High Court decision last summer that Mr Hamilton can proceed with his libel action over allegations made by Mr Al Fayed in a television documentary that he had paid Mr Hamilton in cash for asking questions in Parliament.

Mr Al Fayed's lawyers have argued that because Parliament has already made a ruling on the issue, the libel action in the courts cannot go ahead as this would amount

to questioning the authority of Parliament.

George Carnan, QC, for Mr Al Fayed, has told the judges that to question Parliament's decision would amount to an attack on its historic rights as protected under Article 9 of the Bill of Rights, then none of us can do so and the right to freedom of speech disappears."

But yesterday Mr Brown said there was no argument about a conflict between one adjudication (Parliament) and another (the courts) because they would be looking at different evidence and would be using different procedures. He rejected the

notion that parliamentary privilege was so sensitive that it would be undermined by a court's coming to a different conclusion. "Great oaks can take the occasional storm in the way that orchids can't."

He said that the inquiry by Sir Gordon Downey into the allegations had not been approved or rejected by the Commons Committee on Standards and Privileges. Its findings had not been given the authority that Sir Gordon had sought, he said. They did not impose any notional penalty

on him. But, he told the judges, there was "no suggestion of corruption or criminality — and that being so, the Select Committee simply left Sir Gordon's findings alone. But what it did not do was approve them."

Sir Gordon has said — although Mr Hamilton denied it — that his behaviour fell well below the standards of an MP, he said. "That is clearly a long way from a finding of corruption or criminality," he said.

The hearing continues.

# Prince cements reconciliation with Argentina

FROM ALAN HAMILTON IN BUENOS AIRES

THE Prince of Wales launched into one of his most delicate diplomatic missions when he arrived in Buenos Aires yesterday for a three-day official visit to Argentina.

Avoiding any mention of the still disputed Falkland Islands, the Prince and Guido di Tella, Argentina's anglophilic Foreign Minister, called in public speeches for a full return to the friendship between the two countries that had existed since the founding of the South American nation in the early 19th century.

At a wreath-laying ceremony at the ornate statue to José de San Martín, the country's national hero and liberator of

much of the continent from its Spanish colonisers, the Prince told dignitaries and a curious, friendly crowd of 300: "We are delighted by the steady rehabilitation of the close relationship that can and should exist between us."

Senor di Tella, who studied at St Antony's College, Oxford, told the Prince: "Your visit is a visit of reconciliation; it is very important to us. Your presence is a confirmation that this country needed very badly." The closest Señor di Tella came to referring to past difficulties was when he quoted from a poem, *The Rose*, by Argentina's greatest literary figure, Jorge Luis

Borges. "I am not sure what it means, but it is about ambiguities and different paths to follow."

The Prince had arrived at the city's airport to be greeted by the Foreign Minister and a guard of honour in tin-soldier uniforms. He then set off in a motorcade through the chaotic Italian-style traffic of Buenos Aires to his wreath-laying.

The Prince's car was provided with a mounted escort for which the traffic miraculously parted to allow him to get to the Casa Rosada, the Pink Palace seat of national power, from whose balcony all the country's leaders, from Eva Perón to General Galtieri, have declared to the crowd.

There, in the gilded and white marble Salón Blanco, he had a private meeting with President Menem and a photocall with three young Argentine footballers who will soon travel to England to train with Manchester United, thanks to a diplomatic mission by Sir Bobby Charlton.

The Prince passed on the Queen's best wishes and gave the President a silver and gold watch. President Menem, speaking fondly in Spanish of his visit to London last October, gave the Prince a picture of horses.

Later, the Prince laid a

wreath at the Malvinas monument, a sombre memorial in a city park with some 700 names of the Argentine dead chiselled into black granite panels. His arrival was greeted by a military band playing the jaunty strains of Colonel Bogey, possibly an affectionate reference to the Prince being Colonel-in-Chief of the Welsh Guards and The Parachute Regiment, both heavily involved in the Falklands campaign.

A small crowd gathered to watch, held at bay by a strong police presence, but there were no demonstrations. The Prince walked up to the memorial accompanied by William

Marsden, the British Ambassador. The plain green wreath said simply: "From HRH The Prince of Wales."

A few Argentine veterans lined up to meet the Prince. Commodore Leandro Gurina, who had been a young officer on the destroyer *Hercules* during the conflict, said later: "For me the Prince's visit is a very kind gesture. The important thing is to give respect to all the people who gave their lives. We look forward, not backwards; the future is one of more reconciliation."

Asked his view on who

should have sovereignty over the islands, the commodore re-

sponded: "That is a political question; I will not answer."

Retired Surgeon-Captain Rick Jolly, the only British veteran present, approached Air Force Major Guillermo Del Valle, who had been a Skyhawk pilot and had attacked HMS *Glasgow*. "You put a cannon shot through the blades of Commodore Simon Thornewill's helicopter," Captain Jolly said. "He sends his regards."

As the Prince left, a group of curious Argentines began singing a song in Spanish of which the only clear word was "Malvinas".

The Prince's visit, which fol-

lows the successful one by President Menem to London in October last year, is the British Government's way of signalling its approval for Senior Menem, who is due to retire from office later this year, and who, in ten years of office, has done much to rebuild Argentina's economy and to reinforce the country's return to democracy.

Under his presidency, the two countries have gradually rebuilt normal relations, and the issue of the Falkland Islands has been put to one side, although Argentina's claim to the islands remains enshrined in its constitution.

## Suspects' plea

Police have refused to support a request for rehousing by two men suspected of murdering Stephen Lawrence. The mother of Neil and Jamie Acourt, of Blackheath, South London, asked Greenwich council to move them because of threatening mail. It is understood that police decided the threat did not amount to harassment.

## Allergy warning

An allergy expert told an inquest at Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, that many people allergic to nuts can be affected unwittingly. Steven Hall, 19, who was sensitive to peanuts, died after eating a restaurant curry, although he had asked for a nut-free dish. Verdict: accidental death.

## Implant worries

More than 1,500 women have called a health department helpline after Tri-loc breast implants, which contain soy oil, were withdrawn by the Government amid health fears. Up to 30 of the 5,000 women fitted with them have suffered reactions possibly linked to the implants leaking. The helpline number is 0800 004440.

## James Major ill

James Major, the son of the former Prime Minister, was treated in hospital overnight after collapsing in the Met Bar, Central London, during a night out with his fiancée, Emma Noble. Tests showed he was suffering from postural hypotension, a blood circulation condition. He was discharged yesterday morning.

## Surgery payout

A woman who had 84 operations to try to correct complications after a hysterectomy has accepted a six-figure payout. Jeanette Saunders, 45, of Cardiff, received the money in an out-of-court settlement from Bro Taf Health Authority. She said the hysterectomy in 1984 left her incontinent, and had affected her son's upbringing.

## Quiz win stays

A contestant on TV's *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* whose wrong answer to a question was taken as the right one by Chris Tarrant, the host, will keep his £125,000 prize. The producers decided that Tony Kennedy, 29, a warehouseman from Blackpool, should not be punished for their mistake.

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The Prince of Wales is greeted by well-wishers after laying a wreath at the Malvinas memorial to the Argentine dead.



The Prince meeting President Menem yesterday

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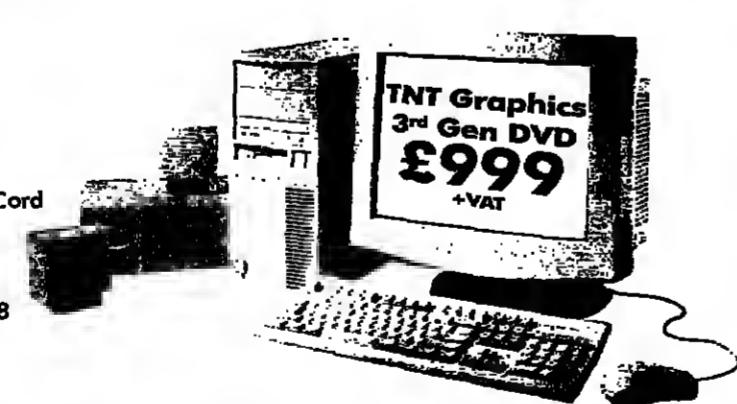
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# Jealous lover 'faked suicide pact to cover up murder'

**Ex-soldier is accused of strangling model who laughed at the idea of marriage, reports Adrian Lee**

A FORMER girlfriend of the Oasis singer Liam Gallagher was said to have been strangled by her possessive lover, who tried to hide the crime by inventing a suicide pact.

Kadamba Simmons, an actress and model who had also dated the boxer Prince Naseem Hamed, was about to have her first leading film role when she was murdered by Yaniv Malka, the Old Bailey was told.

Afterwards, the former Israeli Army soldier spent 90 minutes threatening to jump from a fifth-floor balcony and later claimed he had made other suicide attempts after helping his lover to take her own life. He had told police that she believed herself to be possessed by a witch and that they had agreed to commit suicide to end their problems.

The jury was told that the pact was a sham. Mr Malka, 22, was besotted by Miss Simmons, 24, but she had doubts about the relationship, which had begun when they met on holiday in Goa, India.

The naked body of Miss Simmons was found in the shower of a friend's flat in Islington, North London, on June 14 last



Malka: became besotted after romance in Goa

year. The previous day Mr Malka had arrived in Britain, sweeping her into his arms at Waterloo Station and stating that he intended to marry her.

David Waters, for the prosecution, said that although Mr Malka was obsessed by Miss Simmons, she was merely fond of him. Exactly what was said and happened on the night of June 13 would never be known but, at some stage, Mr Malka realised that his lover's future life did not necessarily involve him, he said.

They had a meal at a restaurant and returned to the flat. Mr Malka allegedly began to strangle Miss Simmons on the night of June 13 would never be known but, at some stage,

Mr Malka realised that his lover's future life did not necessarily involve him, he said.

He had told the official that, although she had believed in God that she was in love with Mr Malka, she was now not sure that it had been any more than a holiday romance. Mr Malka's stay in Britain was to have been the test for that. Mrs Smith described how the couple embraced at the terminal: "He literally swept her off her feet," she said. "She was a little embarrassed."

In his account to police, Mr

Malka said that he and Miss

Simmons had talked of joint

suicide in Germany, where

they had travelled after leaving Goa. In his version of

events, she had used a rope containing two nooses, to hang herself. When she was dead he had used clothes, a luggage strap, knives, pills and bleach to try to complete his side of the agreement. The court was told that the flat was covered in his blood.

Next morning he took a taxi to University College in Central London, where he climbed to the fifth floor and threatened to jump to his death.

Mr Waters said: "All these efforts failed and, you see, failed rather miserably... Although that flat had every appearance of his having tried to commit suicide, he seems to have done himself little damage, just enough to spread blood."

Mr Malka denies murder, but admits assisting Miss Simmons to commit suicide. The

jury was told he could be convicted of manslaughter if it was found there was a pact.

Mr Waters said that Miss Simmons had every reason to live. "She was by all accounts a very beautiful woman. She moved in the pop music and film world. To all who knew her it seemed she displayed an tremendous zest for life and she was very popular."

Miss Simmons had given no indication to friends, who spoke to her on the night of her death, that she was contemplating suicide. In fact, Mr Waters said, the following month she was to travel to South Africa to star in a film for £30,000.

Sarah Smith, an immigration official who questioned Mr Malka when he arrived on a Eurostar train from Brussels, said that he had told her that Miss Simmons was going to be his wife. Mrs Smith, who also spoke to Miss Simmons, said that she had laughed at the idea of marriage.

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The hearing continues.



Kadamba Simmons: she was about to have her first leading film role

## Man who spurned Jagger ends up satisfied

By SUSIE STEINER

IN 1963 a drummer made what some might see as an bad decision — although today Carlo Little himself is happy enough. After a few gigs with a struggling band called the Rolling Stones, he reckoned he had no future in rock 'n' roll.

"I was a professional musician and it didn't seem worthwhile. They had a gig here and there but nothing substantial," he said. The band went on to perform at Wembley Stadium. Mr Little went on to run a burger stand in the grounds.

Tonight television viewers will see him meet the Stones for the first time in 35 years, as a gig. Yesterday the 60-year-old caterer, who has been married for 31 years, with two children and a grand-daughter, said: "I suppose you could say it's worked out quite well for them. But I have a nice lifestyle with my wife Iris."

"There are no hard feelings and I'm delighted for all of them. At least I don't have to put up with all of the problems that go with fame and fortune."

Mr Little had been a session musician with the Cyril Davies All Star band when he worked with the Stones. "I played about four gigs with them but it only paid a couple of quid a time," he said. "Brian Jones begged me to stay, but I couldn't — it wasn't enough." He recommended a friend — Charlie Watts.

Last summer Mr Little had a glimpse of the rock star's lifestyle at the Stones gig in Paris. "When they started to play 'Satisfaction' the place went wild," he said. "I must say, it gave me quite a buzz. It must be quite something to have that effect on people."

Mr Little was then invited to Mick Jagger's birthday party. "It was like being with old friends."

The reunion can be seen on UK Raw on Channel 5 at 11.30pm tonight.

## Family fight over Aboriginal man's body

By CHRISTINE MIDDAP

THE body of an Aboriginal man who was taken from his Australian mother at birth and adopted by an English couple was at the centre of a High Court battle yesterday.

Dayne Childs, 26, has lain in a Norwich morgue since July because his two families on opposite sides of the world cannot agree on his funeral. His adoptive mother, Annette Childs, and his girlfriend, Kirsten Milton, the mother of his daughter, wanted him cremated

in his home city of Norwich after his death in a road accident. His biological mother, the Aboriginal activist Cheryl Buchanan, says his spirit can rest only if he is buried in his homeland.

Mr Childs was taken from his mother at birth in circumstances that are unclear, and adopted by Mr and Mrs Childs as a toddler. Known as Illych Branfield in Australia, he was reunited with his Aboriginal family in 1996. He became a symbol of the "stolen generation", the thousands of Aboriginal children forcibly taken from their families

by the Government until 1970. David Trux, solicitor for Ms Buchanan, said his client felt that Mr and Mrs Childs had done a fine job in raising Dayne. "But she says to me, 'They had him in life, can't we have his spirit in death?'"

Mr Childs, who did not attend court, told an Australian newspaper: "We are devastated that Dayne has been prevented from having the funeral he would have wanted."

The family are concerned that his daughter, Honie, 2, should be able to visit his grave. Ms Milton attended

court yesterday but left in tears and refused to comment.

Also in court was Mr Childs' biological grandmother, Poniydflydu, and her partner, Gnarnayarrabe Waitari. They found Mr Childs in England in 1996. Poniydflydu returned upon his death and has refused to leave unless she can take his body home.

Mr Trux said there were no precedents in England or Australia for the case. The hearing in the Family Division of the High Court in London was adjourned until May 11.



Poniydflydu: refuses to leave without body

## 'Mean' father wins share of cash payout for son's death

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A MOTHER yesterday described her former husband as "Britain's meanest father" after he successfully pursued her for a share of the £10,000 compensation payout she won after their teenage son died in a road accident.

Debra High, 39, from Methley, near Leeds, was ordered by a judge at Blackpool County Court to pay £4,100 to the man that she says abandoned her 17 years ago, leaving her to bring up their two young children on her own.

Outside the court, she said: "I am absolutely devastated. He does not deserve a penny."

Mrs High, a photographic laboratory worker, said that David Muscroft, 44, an unemployed comedian, had left her and their children, Jason and Samantha, to become a Buttons Redcoat. She said that he had paid little maintenance and visited the children only twice a year.

When Jason died, aged 17, in a car accident five years ago, his mother launched a three-year legal battle against Leeds City Council, eventually winning a £10,000 settlement.

The teenager was killed when the car in which he was travelling skidded out of control on loose chippings on a recently resurfaced road near Pontefract and crashed into a bus shelter.

Police told the subsequent inquest that driving on such a



Jason's mother, Debra High, who must share payout

had actually pursued the original claim on behalf of Mr Muscroft, herself and her present husband.

"All of this could have been prevented if Mrs High had agreed with the arrangements that were reached in the original proceedings. But she has not given him a penny of it," he said.

Mr Muscroft insisted that he had been a good father to

his children. "I didn't want this to happen," he said. "It could all have been avoided."

John High, who became Jason's stepfather, said: "There is no way I would ask my wife for the money back from my son's own funeral. What father on Earth could do that? It is disgusting."

Judge Robert Foster ruled that Mrs High must pay the money within two weeks.

## Restraint is Galliano's totem at Dior

FROM LISA ARMSTRONG  
FASHION EDITOR, IN PARIS

LAST season, John Galliano trawled through Red Star China and the Soviet Union for the most deluxe tailoring on Mao suits and Bolshevik chic. This time, under the inscrutable gaze of his boss, Bernard Arnault, he went to Africa. But it was a restrained trip.

Under the new reign of austerity at Dior, the props were confined to a few totem poles planted into a silver-leaf catwalk and the odd doleful look-

ing wooden mask festooning the cocco mirrors (austerity being relative in Paris couture houses).

This was Africa by way of Modigliani — cue lots of those lean, languid, Wallis Simpson silhouettes that Galliano has been exploring for some time.

They are the vandals of the nineties... the graffiti artists of this decade... JOANNA COLES IN NEW YORK

and his favourite Edwardian suits, perhaps as a nod to *Out of Africa*. The best of these were punched from camel suede or stretchy rust-coloured knits. Many were obscured by the enormous back-to-front cable knit cardigans that were slipped on top of eve-

rything, including some of the evening wear, giving the flared, A-line treatment that so many other designers have bestowed on skirts, to the top half of the body, leaving the lower half pencil slim. It was one of those silhouettes that looks striking on six foot models — and few others.

Some of the outside, square-shaped sloppy jumpers had an Eighties feel to them. But they probably won't change the direction of fashion.

Photograph, page 28

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# Sussex police chief suspended over raid

Shooting of unarmed suspect leads to charges, reports Stewart Tendler

THE Chief Constable of Sussex Police was suspended from duty yesterday over a raid in which an unarmed suspect was shot.

Paul Whitehouse, 53, was abroad on holiday when the decision was announced by his police authority and the Police Complaints Authority. Mark Jordan, his deputy, has already been suspended over the case and both men face disciplinary charges.

The suspension of the two officers in a modern force is unprecedented. Day-to-day control of the 3,000-strong force will pass to assistant

chief constables who will be overseen by a Home Office Inspector of Constabulary.

Mr Whitehouse, a Cambridge graduate who has been Chief Constable for five years, was suspended over claims that he made misleading comments about the death in January last year of James Ashley during an operation involving allegations of drug dealing and an attempted murder.

Mr Ashley, 39, was killed in his flat in Hastings at 4am by a single shot. He had a conviction for manslaughter. Police later found a small amount of cannabis and an air weapon.

Kent police were called in to

examine the raid and later Sir John Hoddinott, the Chief Constable of Hampshire, was asked to investigate the role of senior officers. He interviewed Mr Whitehouse last year.

Two reports from the investigations were considered by the Sussex police authority which then announced that disciplinary charges would be brought against Mr Whitehouse and Mr Jordan later this month.

Last night the Sussex police authority said that Tony Lake, one of the assistant chief constables, had been made Deputy Chief Constable designate and would run the force.

Mr Whitehouse is expected to contest any charges. Noted as a reforming officer, he has been mentioned as a possible candidate to head the Metropolitan Police.

He read economics at Cambridge University and once in the police, rose rapidly. He was a superintendent by the time he was 30 and became assistant chief constable of Greater Manchester.

He moved to West Yorkshire as Deputy Chief Constable and in Sussex maintained a reforming profile. He refused to sign a performance-related pay contract and lost a bonus of £12,000 because he opposed the idea of rewards for individuals.

## OFFICER SACKED FOR WRITING RACIST GRAFFITI

Scotland Yard has sacked a police constable for writing racist graffiti on a poster in a station in North London (Stewart Tendler writes). At a conference yesterday to encourage Asian recruits, Sir Paul Condon, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, said that he would not tolerate racism. Disciplinary powers that come into force next month will make it easier to sack officers.

The officer, thought to be one of the first in the Metropolitan Police to lose his job over racism, was dismissed for misconduct after he wrote a comment on a poster for blood donors. He later claimed it had been a joke.

Sir Paul also cited the case of a sergeant who was demoted to constable for misconduct after making racist comments. At least four other officers, including a chief inspector and an inspector, are also under investigation.

Scotiaod Yard is offering 70 scholarships to black and Asian students. Sir Paul said that the scholarships would be offered over the second and third years of a student's study. Officials hope that at least 20 will then join the Yard as police officers or civilian staff.

Details and the value of the scholarships are still being drawn up with a company that runs similar schemes for the Civil Service, Shell and the Prison Service.

Yesterday Sir Paul assured Asian community leaders that he intends to reach nearly 1,000 officers from ethnic minority backgrounds by April next year. He has told the force he wants an extra 80 black, Asian or Chinese officers on top of nearly 900 already in the force.

There are 600,000 Asians living in London but the Metropolitan Police has 294 officers with Asian backgrounds out of 26,000 officers.



Paul Whitehouse: alleged to have made misleading comments about suspect's death

**Hit-and-run victim is told to fight own case**

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY  
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

A BUSINESSMAN injured by a hit-and-run driver has been told by police to fight the case himself, although they admit having enough evidence to prosecute. They told Max Lehranit was "not in the public interest" to prosecute the motorist who sped off after knocking him off his motorcycle.

Instead, the Metropolitan Police offered copies of their reports into the accident to help Mr Lehranit to bring his own private action or to support an insurance claim. They also gave him the name and address of the car driver. Failure to report an accident carries a maximum penalty of £5,000 or a six-month prison sentence.

Mr Lehranit, who runs a London finance company, was taken to hospital with minor head and rib injuries after the accident in Kennington, South London. He said that he was "flabbergasted" by the police decision. "We are always being told that failing to report an accident is a serious offence and then the police do nothing about it even when they have evidence."

The Metropolitan Police said: "The decision to pursue a case is often quite complex and involves a number of issues such as the quality of witness statements and the resources we have available."

## Poirot's grey cells exercised on TV

By CAROL MIDGLEY  
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

TWO new films based on Agatha Christie novels are to be made for British television, starring David Suchet as the Belgian detective Hercule Poirot.

*Lord Edgware Dies* and *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, one of Christie's most critically acclaimed books, will be broadcast in the UK at the end of the year and distributed to the American networks.

Chorion pic, which last year bought the intellectual property rights to all of Christie's works for £10 million, announced that it was investing a "substantial" sum into the production budget of £3.5 million.

The company said that it was anxious to keep control of all television, publishing and licensing deals to maximise its profits and strengthen its brand.

Christie remains the world's bestselling author, having sold 2 billion books in more than 50 languages. During her lifetime she was outsold only by the Bible and Shakespeare.

John Conlon, Chorion's chairman, said: "Agatha Christie is one of the world's best-loved and widely read authors and it is our plan to build upon this popularity and renown by commissioning more productions based on her works."

The films will be made by Carnival Films. Since 1989 Carnival and LWT have produced 42 Poirot episodes, which have sold in 44 countries with revenues of £15 million.

ITV claimed an early victory in the tea-time new battle on Monday. Unofficial figures showed that 7.3 million viewers tuned in for the new *ITV Evening News* programme hosted by Trevor McDonald at 6.30pm. Its forerunner, a 5.40pm bulletin, had attracted an average of 4 million. The BBC's *Six O'Clock News*, which has consistently been the country's most popular news programme, pulled in 6.5 million viewers.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Six held as police storm tower block

Police stormed a tower block after colleagues were bombarded with bricks, bottles, knives and a television. West Midlands Police sent officers in protective vests into the nine-storey block in Tipton after a shot was fired from an airgun. The area was cordoned off and armed officers placed on standby before uniformed police went in and arrested six people.

### Baby whale dies

A baby whale died after being washed up near Clacton, Essex. The 12ft minke had become separated from its mother. RSPCA staff and a divers' marine rescue unit kept it wet but a coastguard spokesman said: "It could not be saved."

### Unlucky break

James Stones, 12, who had just been picked from 300 hopefuls to join a child modelling agency, suffered facial cuts and a broken jaw when he was struck by a hit-and-run lorry driver at Thurso, South Yorkshire.

### Swan shooter

An angler who shot and killed a cygnet that was spoiling his day's fishing has admitted a charge of criminal damage to the bird. Teesside magistrates ordered Lee Standbra, 21, of Billingham, Cleveland, to forfeit his air rifle.

### Queen burgled

Two historic barns on the Queen's estate at Sandringham, Norfolk, have been stripped of their roofs by thieves. The gang escaped with 500 clay tiles worth £1500 from the buildings, which were due to be restored.

### Cat on a hot roof

A stray cat was found clinging to a car shelf after going through a paint-baking oven at 145°C at the Peugeot plant in Ryton-on-Dunsmore, near Coventry. The RSPCA treated it for burnt paws and shock.

## Star mission leaks £22m into space

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A MISSION to study the formation of galaxies, costing £22 million, has been written off after its supply of coolant leaked into space.

WIRE, the Wide-Field Infra-red Explorer, was launched last Thursday by Nasa, the US space agency. It is a small, low-cost satellite fitted with an infrared telescope cooled to -260°C and designed to study the process of star formation.

Soon after launch, the spacecraft began to spin. Controllers believe that the telescope cover was released early, al-

lowing the Sun to shine directly on to the frozen hydrogen coolant. This caused the hydrogen to vapourise and vent into space, spinning the spacecraft. Controllers have managed to slow the rate of spin, but the entire hydrogen supply has gone, meaning that the telescope will not work.

"We are very disappointed," Ed Weiler, Associate Administrator for Space Science at Nasa, said. "We are establishing a formal anomaly investigation board to help us to plan future missions."

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Hit-and-run  
victim is  
told to fight  
own case

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999

HOME NEWS 5

# Villages put on alert for worst flood levels

HUNDREDS of riverside householders near York were preparing last night for their highest flood levels this century.

Red alerts were issued to villages yesterday as a huge surge flowed down the River Derwent. Millions of gallons of water, swollen by melting snow and six inches of rain on the North York Moors, have already burst the river's bank upstream at Malton, causing extensive damage.

Yesterday the focus of attention moved down-river as workers from the Environment Agency toured the lower Derwent Valley, warning home-owners and businesses to prepare for the worst. Work on a flood-protection scheme for Stamford Bridge, funded by the Environment Agency, was to have begun last year, but a start was postponed until next year.

The agency has been accused by people in Stamford Bridge of not giving out adequate warnings but a spokesman said that a series of alerts, of increasing severity, had been issued in recent days.

The disaster has led a local MP to suggest that help from

Paul Wilkinson  
reports on the  
mayhem caused  
by relentless  
rainfall and  
melting snow

the Government might be needed. John Greenway, the Conservative MP for Ryedale, whose constituency office in Malton is flooded, said: "It's the worst disaster in most townspeople's memory. I feel so sorry for the families and businesses affected. It's awful."

Peter Long, who owns a petrol station and shop in Stamford Bridge, said: "I've lived here for 40 years but have never seen anything like this." He has spent three days at his shop trying to limit flood damage. All his Mother's Day cards have been lost.

The Environment Agency reported that at Malton the river had peaked early yesterday at more than 10ft above its normal level, topping the previous

highest level set in 1931. Helen Grayson, of the agency's flood team, said: "This is all happening because of the shape of the land. It's a shallow bowl so although nothing's holding the water up, it just takes a long time to make its way down. If you were filling a bath with the taps on full blast, even with the plug pulled out, it would continue to fill up. It's the same situation here."

Her team will be on standby as the water makes its way down the Derwent to its confluence with the River Ouse at Barnby tidal barrage.

The agency has distributed sandbags to homes, and council workers have been taken to refuse collections to help to protect homes and businesses.

In Malton and neighbouring Norton more than 100 families had to quit their water-logged homes. Most took refuge with relatives or friends. North Yorkshire County Council



The scene in Norton and Malton, North Yorkshire, yesterday after the River Derwent burst its banks. Many families had to abandon their homes

set up refuges in Malton's two secondary schools which had closed because pupils could not get there.

Malton and Norton are normally only separated by a bridge across the Derwent, but yesterday motorists were

making a 12-mile detour. The A169 between Malton and Pickering and the A166 from York to the east coast was blocked at Stamford Bridge. Many minor roads were also shut and rail services between Scarborough and York were

suspended because of track flooding at Malton station.

Telephone lines throughout the area were out of action.

At Stamford Bridge, police complained that families were visiting the village to see the floods. Some were even letting

their children paddle in the rising water. A force spokesman said: "This is particularly dangerous: the Derwent is fast-flowing and very deep."

In Malton the river set a high on Monday of 16.7 metres, 100 cm above the previous

highest in 1931. At Stamford Bridge, where the previous highest level of 9.57 metres was reached in 1947, it was 9.74 metres yesterday.

The Environment Agency has set up an information line on the floods, on 0645 881183.

## Elderly couple catch up with all mod cons

By HELEN JOHNSTONE



Albert Jutus: we only ever wanted each other

have always had each other, and that's all we ever wanted.

Mrs Jutus, 72, a former potato picker who now has mobility problems, is staying at a nursing home while the work is done, forcing the couple to live apart for the first time since they were married 43 years ago.

The couple, who have no family, did not realise that they were entitled to grant aid to improve their property. Mr Jutus, who used to make furniture out of old floorboards, said: "We never wanted handouts. We don't take charity. We've paid for what we've needed out of our own pockets and that's always been the best way."

"We are looking forward to the electricity and gas. It will make us more comfortable but it won't change us."

### NEWS IN BRIEF

Six held as police storm tower block



The bungalow that is to get a £40,000 renovation

## Monica and the Morse mystery

By ELIZABETH JUDGE

MOTIVES were mixed yesterday as 1,000 people queued for the latest Monica Lewinsky book-signing. Among them was Colin Dexter, author of the Inspector Morse novels.

He said: "I think she is very fresh-faced, young and attractive, and I wish her well." He presented her with a copy of his book, *Morse's Greatest Mystery*, in which he had written: "Good luck, I wish I was 45 years younger."

David Kagan, an American student, said: "She was treated badly by the Government and the media. I want to show her I'm on her side."

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# School nurses want to provide emergency Pill

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

SCHOOL nurses should be authorised to hand out the morning-after contraceptive pill and give family planning advice to all children in secondary schools, including the Royal College of Nursing agreed yesterday.

Bucking a call to end inequalities in the health care of adolescents, delegates at the annual congress in Harrogate were told that the number of school nurses was being cut although young people increasingly wanted confidential advice on intimate problems.

Jane Naish, the college's community health adviser, said there were only 4,000 school nurses in the state sector and that they were overwhelmed with requests from teenagers for help about stress, contraception, sexual health, family relationships and sexual identity. "At the

least nurses should be able to provide contraception and emergency contraception," she said. "We would like to have new powers to prescribe them, although nurses who did this would obviously have to be competent and properly trained."

Miss Naish said that ideally a school should have at least one visit a week from a school nurse and there should be posters giving advice on where girls could obtain emergency contraception at times when the nurse was not available.

Miss Naish said that school nurses were ideally placed to provide good education that would cut the level of promiscuity among younger children. In countries such as Holland, where sex education is an important part of the curriculum, the average age for teenagers having sex for the first time was 18, a year older than

in Britain, which has the second highest teenage pregnancy rate in the developed world.

Sexual diseases are also spreading rapidly in Britain.

with about 100,000 new cases of chlamydia, an infection that can cause infertility, each year.

Victoria Gillick, the anti-abortion family campaigner, said that she was appalled by the nurses' resolution. "It seems the adult world has given up on the young," she said. Nuala Scanlon, of the anti-abortion group Life, said the idea was "grossly irresponsible". No responsible parents would want their child to go to school "and be killed out for underage sex".

The British Pregnancy Advisory Service and the Family Planning Association supported the idea of school nurses being able to prescribe emergency and normal contraceptives.



Jane Naish said that the 4,000 school nurses are overwhelmed with requests for help

## Smoking a 'slow suicide'

A DENTAL technician who spent 20 years making dentures for oral cancer patients will today tell nurses who smoke that they are committing slow suicide. Peter Cooke, 39, had smoked 15 cigarettes a day for 25 years when oral cancer was diagnosed 14 months ago (Ian Murray writes).

"I knew the dangers but I always thought it would happen to somebody else," he said. "Working for the NHS is stressful and it is easy to see why nurses smoke, but if they do

there is every chance that they will become patients themselves."

The Royal College of Nursing is helping the 21 per cent of nurses who smoke to give up. They are to be given a week's supply, worth £20, of nicotine replacement patches or gum.

Mr Cooke said that when he was told he had oral cancer, the first thing he wanted was a cigarette. "It is very difficult to give up but it really isn't worth it," he said. "Throw your fags away, not your life."

### OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

**action  
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## Doctors back the right to refuse blood

By HELEN RUMBLE

JEHOVAH'S Witnesses will be allowed to die if they refuse blood transfusions, doctors agreed yesterday.

Guidelines have been announced to try to end the confusion surrounding the treatment of Britain's 145,000 Jehovah's Witnesses, who believe that accepting another person's blood is a sin because certain passages in the Bible forbid the consumption of blood. Anaesthetists, who administer blood transfusions, have been born between their duty to save lives and respecting the wishes of their patients.

Now a report from the Association of Anaesthetists, which represents the majority of anaesthetists in Britain, said that they should not intervene without consent.

The Royal College of Nursing is helping the 21 per cent of nurses who smoke to give up. They are to be given a week's supply, worth £20, of nicotine replacement patches or gum.

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oral cancer, the first thing he wanted was a cigarette. "It is very difficult to give up but it really isn't worth it," he said. "Throw your fags away, not your life."

### DEADLY MISTAKES

The number of patients being given the wrong type of blood rose by a quarter last year, causing two deaths and 20 cases of serious injury, according to a report published yesterday.

Serious Hazards of Transfusion, the watchdog on the use of blood products, reported that 110 people were given the wrong blood last year, compared with 81 in 1997. The mistakes were mostly as a result of careless checking of patient records, the report said. It called for computerised patient identification systems to be introduced.

Now a report from the Association of Anaesthetists, which represents the majority of anaesthetists in Britain, said that they should not intervene without consent.

"Administering blood to a Jehovah's Witness without consent has been likened by the movement to rape," Michael Ward, one of the authors of the report, said. "It would not result in expulsion from the community, but would have a deep psychological effect."

Tony Brace, the hospital information co-ordinator for Jehovah's Witnesses in Britain, said that the guidelines clarified a sometimes fraught stand-off with the medical profession. "We don't know why they describe them as right to die; guidelines we see it as a chance for patients to get the best chance to live. But otherwise the guidelines are really very helpful," he said.

"It is very simple why we don't agree to take blood products. We are told repeatedly in the Bible not to take blood into the body."

## Leap in 'senile delinquency' as population ages

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

AN INCREASING number of elderly people are turning to crime, according to research.

The rise of a new class of "senile delinquents" is identified in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*. It discloses that, as the population ages, the number of offences committed by pensioners with previously blameless lives is increasing.

Graeme Yorston, author of the research and a psychiatrist with Lanarkshire Healthcare Trust in Scotland, said that it was only natural that the increase in the number of elderly people suffering from mental health problems such as dementia and depression should result in a rise in antisocial behaviour.

Prison Service statistics show that the proportion of convicted prisoners aged 60 or over rose from 1 per cent in 1990 to 1.7 per cent in 1997, when there were 80 of them.

Dr Yorston said, however, that the extent of crime by first-time elderly offenders was far higher, not least because of police reluctance to arrest the elderly for anything but the most serious crimes.

Although homicide among the elderly is not common, accounting for 1 to 4 per cent of the total, it does tend to follow a distinct pattern. Psychiatrists have coined the term "Dar-

by and Joan syndrome" to describe elderly spouse homicides. These occur with no warning, are characterised by repeated blows to the head with a blunt object and are often followed by suicide.

Dr Yorston said: "In nursing homes, one patient might assault another, but no one will report it because those involved are old. If they were 30 years younger the case would probably go to court."

Some types of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, can lead to increased irritability and aggression in 30 to 50 per cent of patients. Other forms of the illness, such as frontal lobe dementia, can affect sufferers' judgment and cause them to lose their inhibitions or to become reckless.

Shoplifting is the most common crime among elderly offenders, accounting for an estimated 80 per cent of cases. Violence features in only 10 per cent.

Dr Yorston wants the authorities here to take similar action to those in America, where special prison accommodation and court diversion programmes are available.

□ Tougher prison sentences fail to act as a deterrent to criminals because most do not hear or read about them, researchers at Cambridge University's Institute of Criminology say.

## £75,000 paid over fatal Down's test

By PAUL WILKINSON, NORTH EAST CORRESPONDENT

THE parents of a child who died after a test for Down's syndrome went wrong have received a £75,000 out-of-court payment from the health authority responsible.

The settlement ends an eight-year campaign by Dawn and Terry Parnell whose daughter Mishka had a needle inserted into her brain while in the womb.

She was born in February 1991 blind, deaf and severely brain-damaged, and died 2½ years later. An inquest in 1995 ruled that she died from natural causes.

In the following year, however, an independent inquiry into the obstetrics and gynaecology department at Grimsby Hospital, Lincolnshire, where three women died and two babies were stillborn, found

errors, misjudgments and ineptitude. Michael Muldoon, the consultant in charge of the unit, was accused of failing to supervise his juniors, poor communication and a lack of leadership in specific cases. He retired during the investigation.

The inquiry found that a test on Mrs Parnell, in which a needle was inserted into her womb to draw off fluid for analysis, a sample of amniotic fluid, had been carried out without an ultrasound scanner to check the baby's position.

South Humberside Health Authority initially denied that the test was the cause of Mishka's brain damage. Mrs Parnell, 46, and her husband began a court action and last November the health authority admitted responsibility.

الجامعة

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999

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# IT'S ILLEGAL TO BE GAY IN TWENTY STATES IN THE U.S.A.



TONIGHT  
AT 10.30PM

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

1. Get all gay people to move somewhere else?
2. Get action from Congress, if they can take time off from their own sex scandals?
3. Get The Gay Team aboard their big pink love bus and show these states just how much fun illegal sex can be.

MICHAEL MOORE: THE AWFUL TRUTH  
SERIOUS COMEDY

## Censure test for territory's law chief

FROM JILL McGIVERIN IN HONG KONG

LEGISLATORS in Hong Kong will debate a motion of no confidence today in Elsie Leung, the Secretary for Justice.

Ms Leung is the first senior official to face such a move since the former colony was returned to Chinese rule and comes amid growing concern about confidence in the rule of law, seen by many as a guarantee of Hong Kong's basic freedoms.

The move follows a series of controversial legal decisions, including a Court of Final Appeal ruling that extended the right of abode in the territory to thousands of mainland Chinese children.

■ Beijing: China has detained Wang Lixiong, one of the country's best-known writers, for allegedly revealing state secrets, a Hong Kong human rights group said yesterday.

# Suspected spy kept job at US secret arms lab

BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON



Los Alamos sprawls over three mountains

A SCIENTIST working at the Los Alamos top-secret nuclear laboratory has been dismissed as one of the biggest spy rows since the Cold War engulfed the Clinton Administration.

An investigation confirmed yesterday into allegations that classified information about America's most advanced nuclear weapons had been passed to China, allowing it to leap a generation in the production of its own arsenal.

It appeared there was not enough evidence to charge Wen Ho Lee, the scientist, and the Government came under attack for refusing to act more swiftly once it became clear secrets had been stolen. He has been the focus of FBI scrutiny for nearly three years after intelligence agents realised China had apparently obtained design information in

weekend reports linking leaked secrets and a scientist.

Mr Lee, from Taiwan and in his late fifties, had worked at Los Alamos — hidden in New Mexico's remote Rockies — for at least 12 years with top security clearance. He lost his job for "failing to properly safeguard classified material", having contact with people from a sensitive country" and "apparently attempting to deceive [the] laboratory about security-related issues," the Energy Department said. His failure to co-operate meant there was no prosecution evidence.

China has denied that Mr Lee passed secrets or that it received information. Suspicions arose in 1995 when it became clear that China had gained a key component of a modern arsenal by producing small warheads that could be launched from a single missile — allowing multiple targeting. Intelligence officials uncov-



Los Alamos was set up in 1942 to house the secret Manhattan Project — the race to develop an atomic bomb

ered a Chinese document, written in 1988, indicating knowledge of information about the US W88 miniature warhead.

Republican Congressional leaders have promised hearings on why the Clinton Administration did not react more quickly over the spying amid accusations that the White House was lax because it was trying to build a better relationship with China. Also,

after the 1996 election, the Administration was accused of receiving illegal Chinese campaign contributions.

Senator Richard Shelby said that his Intelligence Committee planned hearings, adding: "We've been prodding the Administration to do more to tighten up security."

Bill Richardson, the Energy Secretary, pledged to co-operate fully in any Senate hear-

ing. After a Monday briefing by the FBI, he told Los Alamos managers that the scientist should go. A letter of dismissal was sent within hours.

Only in recent months was

Mr Lee shifted to a less sensitive job, and the Government made no move to lift his security clearance until even more recently, officials acknowledged.

■ Beijing: China yesterday denied as "unfounded ru-

mors" accusations that it stole nuclear technology as tensions heightened weeks before an American visit by Zhu Rongji, its Prime Minister. (AFP)

**LINKS**

[www.fas.org/](http://www.fas.org/) — Los Alamos National Laboratory  
[www.nndc.bnl.gov/](http://www.nndc.bnl.gov/) — National Nuclear Data Center  
[www.eeci.gov/e/index.html](http://www.eeci.gov/e/index.html) — United States Intelligence Committee



Site of the badly needed Times bridge in Honduras

## Times readers give £100,000 for bridge

BY DAVID ADAMS AND RICHARD BEESTON

A BRITISH engineering company is planning to rebuild a key bridge that was washed away by Hurricane Mitch in Honduras last year, after readers of *The Times* raised more than £100,000 for its reconstruction.

Mabey and Johnson, a Berkshire-based bridge-building firm, said yesterday that it hoped to have the new bridge over the Amarateca River in place by next month. The 77ft road bridge, 15 miles north of the capital, Tegucigalpa, was washed away by a wall of water in October last year. Its loss effectively cut off thousands of villagers in the fertile valleys of Olancho province.

The new bridge is a more durable adaptation of the wartime "Bailey bridge". It will be transported in sections later this month and assembled on site. Oxfam, which co-ordinated the fundraising effort, said that £100,343 was raised from 1,491 donations. It contributed a further £6,000 to meet the

target figure. Mabey and Johnson is selling the bridge at cost price and is offering site preparation and construction costs free.

As President Clinton toured the devastated country and opened a bridge rebuilt by US Marines, the Honduran Government said yesterday that the *Times* bridge was a vital component to the country's reconstruction effort.

"The rains are coming and our salvation is going to be these temporary Bailey bridges. We don't have time to build permanent bridges," said Moses Starkman, Minister for Economic Co-operation. "A country without production can't function and many of the bridges we have left are insecure," he said. "We really need Bailey bridges, and we just don't have enough of them. The *Times* readers' bridge is going to be an enormous help."

Leading article, page 25

### WORLD IN BRIEF

## Norway finds trace of Sellafield waste

Oslo: Norway says that it has found traces of plutonium from the Sellafield nuclear processing plant off its coasts, despite assurances that the radioactive waste was buried by Britain. "This shows that pollution from Sellafield comes to the North Sea even though it wasn't expected," Jesper Simonsen, the Deputy Environment Minister, said. Between 1960 and 1990 Britain dumped 440lb of plutonium into the Irish Sea, experts believing that it would sink into the muddy seabed. Norway, which is not a member of the European Union, will take up the issue with Germany, the current EU president. (Reuters)

## Basque suspects seized

Paris: Police arrested six suspected Basque terrorists, including the man accused of plotting the failed assassination of King Juan Carlos of Spain in 1995 (Adam Sage writes). Javier Arizmendi-Ruiz, head of the military wing of Eta, was arrested with three others as they left a hotel here. In a second raid that coincided with a visit by the Spanish Prime Minister, José María Aznar, police held two others in a flat said to be Eta's Parisian base.

## Britons held in Congo

Kinshasa: Four Britons and an American have been placed under house arrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo for questioning by security officials, diplomats said. "The four British citizens and one American are under house arrest in their hotel in Kinshasa," a Foreign Office spokesman said. The Kinshasa press earlier reported that a group of Westerners had been arrested with maps near Ndolo military airfield. (Reuters)

## Barbie, 40, goes online

New York: Barbie the doll is 40 this week and not showing any signs of slowing down. Mattel Inc plans to release a Barbie with a butterfly tattoo on her stomach and a Working Woman Barbie, who comes with a play laptop computer and mobile phone — while the US Postal Service is issuing a Barbie stamp. The doll boasts sales of about \$2 billion (£1.2 billion) a year. (AP)

### MORE FOREIGN NEWS ON PAGE 21

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we got news  
for you...

BBC NEWS

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12 PAGES  
OF DETAILS  
AND  
ANALYSIS

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THE TIMES

# Budget 99

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**How new  
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affect you**  
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WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999

## Has he got his priorities right this time?

**Comment**  
**Anatole  
Kaletsky**



**I**S IT too good to be true? In delivering an instant comment on each of Gordon Brown's previous Budgets, I began by asking this question and in each case I gave a favourable answer. This year, however, I have to give a less cheerful answer. This package, while it may initially be greeted as the cleverest and most popular of Mr Brown's Budgets, really does seem too good to be true.

The problems with this Budget are not those identified yesterday by the many City commentators — that the economic assumptions are too optimistic or that the Chancellor's tax cuts will deter the Bank of England from cutting interest rates. Contrary to City assessments, this Budget will probably be viewed by the Bank as almost neutral and will have no major effect one way or the other on the outlook for employment, inflation or economic growth.

The potential flaws of this Budget lie not in its macroeconomic impact and assumptions, but in the detailed decisions on how public money will be raised and spent. These flaws can be summarised in two questions: Where will all the money come from? And is this really how we want the Government to spend money on our behalf?

Let me begin with the second question. The Budget is full of narrowly targeted measures favouring or penalising individual economic constituencies. Some of these — poor families with children — may be deserving, but many are not. Why, for example, should the tax system encourage tiny businesses to incorporate themselves, thereby simply wasting on accountancy and administrative fees all the benefits of the lower tax rate? Why reform capital gains tax if you then impose ridiculously long holding periods that discourage genuine risk-taking and enterprise? Why should research be subsidised in small companies but not in big ones, which actually carry out most serious research? Why create a new tax allowance for people who bicycle to work?

Individually all these may be small measures, but taken together they seem to represent a covert triumph for the



The Chancellor's package posed two important questions that the public will want answered: Where will all the money come from? And is this really how we want the Government to spend money on our behalf?

traditions of interventionist economic meddling and social engineering that appeared to be buried with old Labour.

Turning to the question of where all the money comes from, it is worth distinguishing between three sources of the Chancellor's apparent largess. The one emphasised by Mr Brown is the remarkable fall in social security spending since the start of this Government. For this unexpected saving, amounting to an average of £3 billion a year for the next three years, Labour deserves full credit. Under the Tories, social security was consistently the most indiscriminately component of public spending, regu-

larly overspending its cash limits and demanding extra funding from the contingency reserve. Somehow Mr Brown and his colleagues appear to have tamed this monster.

The other two sources of the Chancellor's bounty have less to do with Mr Brown's bursary. The main one is simply economic growth. As long as the economy keeps growing, tax revenues automatically tend to grow even faster, while public spending on unemployment and other symptoms of economic failure automatically tends to decline.

This allows the Chancellor to forecast steady reductions in deficits and public debt ratios,

even as he cuts taxes and increases spending on popular programmes such as education and health. The Treasury expects a pretty robust economic recovery between now and 2002, with the economy growing by more than 3 per cent in the general election year of 2001-02. This growth forecast, which is perfectly plausible from an economic standpoint, would on its own generate money to pay for some of the goodies announced yesterday.

But Mr Brown's apparent generosity has been greatly assisted by the long-term tax increases that were bravely introduced by Tory Chancellors and are now regarded as a per-

manent feature of British economic life. Petrol taxes, tobacco taxes and landfill taxes are all rising rapidly, for good environmental and health reasons. But they create the illusion that Mr Brown is cutting taxes when all he is doing is giving back money taken by the Treasury with the other hand. The same is true of the invisible taxes on insurance, housing sales and corporate pensions funds. These were shrewdly enacted by Mr Brown at the start of this Parliament, in the hope that they would be forgotten by 2002.

The danger for Mr Brown is that voters will be so perplexed by the headlines about unex- pected income-tax cuts that they may start asking more seriously where all the money has come from. If they do, they may begin to sympathise with the attack attempted yesterday by William Hague. They may begin to understand that Mr Brown is continuing the long tradition of trying to bribe voters with their own money. They may begin to notice how steeply their petrol taxes are rising. They may realise that the 10p corporation and income tax bands are nothing more than headline-grabbing gimmicks. And they may begin to ask whether the Government's spending and tax priorities are really ones they share.

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## Little things add up to big rewards

Allan Leighton, Asda chief executive, hails the Chancellor's plans



Allan Leighton believes that large businesses will benefit from Budget-induced rise in "feel-good" index about the new competition policy. I could not agree more that people in Britain are paying too much for some consumer goods. In the past few days we have announced permanent price cuts worth £200 million each year. But at the same time we have to go to the grey market for lux-

ury goods so that we can sell them at a fair price. We can sell designer perfumes at half the manufacturers' recommended price and still make a reasonable profit. "Shares for all" has been our motto at Asda for some time. Our colleagues have already demonstrated that owning shares in their business is an effective incentive. Last July, 26,000 received shares under our Colleague Share Ownership Plan and, in total, we now have more than 60,000 with a direct financial stake in our business. Colleagues tell me that their sense of involvement is

sharpened and that they are more likely to stay with us. So I believe that the Chancellor's moves to encourage long-term employee shareholding will go down well and boost the stakeholding that gives business an extra edge.

Freezing duty on beers, wines and spirits in time for millennium parties will be as popular as the Chancellor intended. But I would like to see him go further. In Britain, £1.12 of the price of a bottle of wine is duty, compared with less than 2p in France. If the Government wants to see price parity between the UK and the rest of Europe, cutting duty rates would be a good place to start.

The employment scrapheap where many people over 50 years old are dumped is one of the great shames of our society. I wholeheartedly support the extension of the New Deal to this group. I know it will work. We have more than 12,000 colleagues in their second half-century, and their skills, experience and energy enrich our business.

If the Chancellor wants to be reassured that this measure will work, let me invite him to one of our eight stores where we have "golden greeters" (people who welcome you to the store) aged over 70 — going strong and full of "wow".

You can still side-step the tax-man, but you'll need to be quick to beat the PEP deadline of April 5th. Any money you put into your PEP will be tax-free now and into the future.

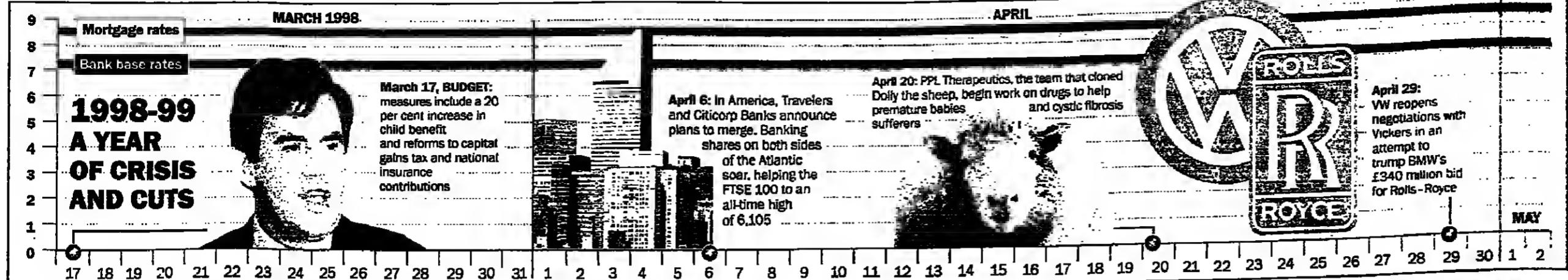
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Unspent benefit allows generosity to others

By ALEXANDRA FREAN  
SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

THE Chancellor's generosity towards pensioners and families has been made possible by an unexpected multi-billion-pound windfall of unspent social security benefits.

This was caused by an over-estimate of the likely cost of benefits made by forecasters under the previous and present administration. As the economy thrived and unemployment fell after Labour came into office in May 1997, demand for state hand-outs fell faster than had been expected.

In 1997-98 alone the Government underspent its Social Security budget by an estimated £2 billion, according to the National Audit Office.

Although the policy changes announced in yesterday's Budget have been costed at £500 million in the first year, £1.6 billion in the second year and £1.5 billion in the third year, the net costs will be far lower because previous forecasts had allowed for higher total spending.

As a result the net effect of the changes will be to increase spending by the Department of Social Security by just £500 million in the first year, £500 million in the second and £400 million in the third.

Since taking power, Labour has declared it a

# Pensioners get tax breaks, higher income guarantee

Charities welcome £100 winter fuel payment, Alexandra Frean reports

pressed, however, by other budget measures that aim to narrow the gap between the richest and poorest pensioners.

The unexpected rise from the current £20 payment, which will go to nearly eight million pensioner households, took lobby groups representing the elderly by surprise.

Lady Greengross, director-general of Age Concern, said: "Pensioners can now look forward to a warmer winter."

Mervyn Kohler, of Help the Aged, said: "We are delighted that for the first time, elderly people have figured in a substantial way in a budget."

Charities were less im-

would do nothing for the considerably numbers of "nearly poor" whose income is just above benefit levels.

The Chancellor could have used the £3 billion at his disposal to upgrade the basic state pension to £75 for all people

## PENSIONERS

ple. That would have been a far better way to spend the money," he said.

About 1.6 million pensioners who currently receive income support would be eligible for the extra premium provided by the Minimum Income Guarantee.

Other measures in the pack-

age include above-inflation increases in the personal tax allowances for pensioners.

Only one third of Britain's 10.6 million pensioners pay income tax at present, and the increased allowance will obviate the need for a further 200,000

pensioners to pay any income tax. For single people aged 65 to 74, the personal tax allowance will rise by £30 to £5720. For couples it will rise to £15,000. Single people aged over 75 will see their personal allowance increase to £5,980.

The income limit above which additional age-related allowances are withdrawn will rise by £500 in line with inflation to £16,800.

Couples in which at least one spouse is aged 65 or over by April 5, 2000, will be able to keep the Married Couples Allowance when it is abolished for younger couples.

The Government has also asked National Savings to develop a new Pensioner Bond with a shorter term than ordinary bonds to provide pensioners with a more flexible way of generating a fixed monthly income.

By keeping the basic state pension pegged to inflation and increasing the Minimum Income Guarantee in line with

earnings, the Chancellor is aiming to help people who need the money most and to ensure that it does not go to retired people living above the income support level.

It will only achieve this aim, however, if it can do more to ensure that the 700,000 or so pensioners who currently fail to claim income support to which they are entitled apply for it.

Lady Greengross said that the Budget should have increased the basic state pension above the level of state benefits. "This is the only way to guarantee retirement income to all pensioners," she said.

Alastair Darling, the Social Security Secretary, said: "We are determined that pensioners get the help they need."



Lady Ingham: big saving

**Door is closing but the ceiling is raised**

By MARIANNE CURPHEN

FAMILIES are being stopped from using a loophole to pass on homes to their heirs without paying inheritance tax. The Chancellor clamped down on this form of tax avoidance at the same time as he raised the threshold on all estates in line with inflation.

At present the first £223,000 of an estate is exempt from inheritance tax. Any sum over that amount — and that includes property, assets and life policies — is taxed at the recipient's highest rate. The tax raises £2 billion for the Treasury every year and is levied on about 3 per cent of all estates. From April 6, the threshold will be increased by £8,000 to £231,000.

However the Chancellor changed the house loophole in response to pressure from the Inland Revenue, which was recently defeated in a ten-year legal battle at the House of Lords. From yesterday it is no

## INHERITANCE

longer possible for the rich to escape tax by transferring property to their heirs in return for a lease to live in the house rent-free. That is often known as making a "gift with reservation". In the Lords case, it was used by Lady Ingram to save her estate a six-figure sum in inheritance tax.

John Batterby, personal tax partner at the accountants KPMG, said that, from now on, wealthy families might take out insurance to cover any inheritance tax charge. Alternatively, they could sell a home, pass on the proceeds to their children and hope to survive seven years, after which the transfer would escape tax.

Inheritance tax is known among the very wealthy as the "voluntary tax", paid only by those who do not employ accountants. Between 20,000 and 30,000 estates that are liable in any year are those of the moderately well-off who die leaving only a house and some investments.

The Chancellor had been expected to scrap the potentially exempt transfers (PETs) which exempt gifts made to heirs at least seven years before die. However, he left that ruling untouched.

# The family gains while couples lose

By JILL SHERMAN  
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

and 700,000 children would be raised above the poverty line. He said that, on average, families would be £740 a year better off from this Budget and the last one.

But the Chancellor risked alienating the middle classes by abolishing the £190-a-week allowance for all married couples, and replacing it with a means-tested tax credit that will favour those earning less than £30,000. The credit will be tapered after one parent earns above £30,000 and will disappear once he or she earns more than £40,000. The Tories accused Mr Brown of introducing a tax system against marriage, as they pointed out that there would be no tax incentive to stay together.

Couples without children will lose £190 a year and the tax credit will be tapered away for all families where one or both parents are top-rate payers, so families earning more than £30,000 will also risk losing up to £190 a year. Treasury officials suggested that higher-income families would lose £1 of tax credit for every £15 earned above the start of the top-rate tax band.

Families, where the main earner get less than £30,000, will get a flat-rate tax credit worth £416 a year from April 2001, irrespective of the number of children they have. But from next month, they will lose the married couple's allowance and therefore be £190-a-year worse off for the next 12 months.

Mr Brown's decision to abolish the married couple's allowance immediately will raise the cost of raising a family. The Chancellor's aim of helping the poorest families also include extending entitlement to maternity allowance to women earning at least £30 a week, and introducing a new Sure Start Maternity Grant to replace the Social Fund maternity payment. Payments for Britain's poorest children will rise from £100 to £200, benefiting 200,000 families. The

is the married couple's allowance immediately will raise the Family Tax Credit of £250 a week and £470 a week for the under-11s. There will also be extra credits in income related benefits for younger children.

Child-care organisations welcomed the extra help for families. Diana Thurley, of the Child Poverty Action Group, said that the tax credits and benefit increases were vital but pointed out that 3.9 million children would still be below the poverty line.

Maeve Sherlock, director of the National Council for One Parent Families, said: "This is

a clear-thinking, modernising Budget." But a women's rights group voted concern that the children's tax credit would not be paid to the mother. Mary-Anne Stephenson, acting director of the Fawcett Society, said: "All the evidence suggests that money targeted at children is best paid to the mother."

The Tories said the new child tax credit would do nothing to encourage marriage. "By not introducing the new credits until 2001, the Chancellor has hit married couples with hikes of £1.6 billion," said Iain Duncan Smith, Shadow

Social Security spokesman. The net cost of the Chancellor's measures for children will be £1.5 billion in 2001. Although he will save £2 billion on the abolition of the married couple's allowance, he will spend nearly £3 billion on other measures including: £1.4 billion on the new child tax credit, £550 million on increases in income-support child premiums, £750 million on rises in working family tax credit, £255 million on child benefit rises, £20 million on the Sure Start Maternity Grant and £15 million on maternity pay reforms.

A Budget note to families: 700,000 children will be raised above the poverty line, said the Chancellor



# Swelling the coffers of the conjugal anarchist

During the Chancellor's speech, a warm glow spread over the nation. His soaring words about children left even the most cynical observer impressed. As he vowed to support families, the usually ascetic son of the manse was using touchy-feely language more reminiscent of Oprah Winfrey. Although unmarried and childless, Gordon Brown appeared to empathise with the financial and other problems of raising children and be prepared to contribute royally to the expense.

Any feelings of gratitude were however, short-lived. One glance at the small print of his measures and it was clear to see that we had been beguiled. Instead of the institution of the traditional family and married life, the Chancellor had indeed undermined matrimony.

One accountant, not usually seen as a traditional moralist, described the measures as an encitement to "conjugal anarchy", encouraging the bearing of children outside wedlock. For the first time since income tax was created, there will be no recognition of the institution of marriage within the system. Only those over 65 will continue to receive the allowance. Unless you are older, richer and have

substantial assets and can use the valuable capital gains and inheritance tax measures, there is now little point in marrying, following the disappearance of the married couple's allowance. Sarah Macaulay, Gordon Brown's significant other, must now despair of ever hearing those wedding bells.

Although the Chancellor might have given us to believe that all families, whatever their income, would benefit from his measures, this will not be the case. In addition, those households that will be better off will be forced to wait.

Studying the sturdy bundle of press releases which contain the real facts about Budget proposals, accountants immediately spied a sleight of hand. The married couple's allowance, worth £285 in the current tax year and £197 in the 1999/2000 tax year, will be withdrawn in April 2000. The Children's Tax Credit for families with one or more children which formed the centrepiece of the speech, will not be launched until a year later, leaving parents out-of-pocket for a year.

Families, where both parents earn more than £38,500 will be excluded from the allowance. The rules will also discriminate against families where one partner

stays at home. John Batterby of KPMG, the accountants, pointed out that if both partners work and earn £30,000 apiece, they will be entitled to claim the children's tax credit allowance of £16. However, if one partner earns £38,500, the upper limit for the new credit, the household will be barred. Obviously Mr Brown believes that a mother's place is in the office.

Mothers, however, have one source of comfort. Although Mr Brown had suggested in his Pre-Budget report last November that he was minded to tax child benefit in the hands of higher-rate taxpayers, he declined to do so yesterday. He may still be working out a way to do so without dismantling the independent taxation reforms under which a

wife is taxed separately from her husband. Meanwhile, Posh Spice, a higher-rate taxpayer, mother will doubtless be relieved to hear that the £14.40 she will receive from next month in child benefit for baby Brooklyn will not be reduced to £8.64.

Those without children may have stopped listening to Mr Brown, thinking that he had forgotten all about them. But they were also in his thoughts. In the time-honoured way of Chancellors of all parties, he gave one with a

hand and took with the other through income tax decreases, the disappearance of mortgage interest tax relief and the change in the company car tax regime. Let us take the case of a Double Income No Kids (DINK) couple. They have

a mortgage and a pack-a-day nicotine habit. Each drives a BMW-3 series company car.

The combined impact of the Budget announcements will leave them some £600 a year worse off. Calculations from Ernst & Young, the accountants, show that the income tax changes, including the increases in the personal allowances, will make them £10 richer. However, set against this gain are the extra car costs they will face, the extra tobacco duties and the loss of MIRAS.

But, by way of consolation for this group, and anyone else who wants to make long-term savings for retirement, the Budget did contain one genuinely heartwarming measure. In his new guise as doughty consumer champion, Mr Brown proposed new disclosure rules

that would make it easier to compare the costs of different mortgage offers, currently a close to impossible task. The Financial Services Authority, the chief investor watchdog, will also publish the costs of pensions and other investments, permitting the public to see for the first time in clear terms how much of their money is eaten up in administration and commissions to middlemen. It is not uncommon to see £1 out of every £4 contributed to a personal pension disappear in myriad charges, with the investor receiving no guarantee of good performance in return. The financial services industry is adept at concealing costs or revealing them in such a way that even an actuary can feel confused. If they continue these practices, they will face the wrath of the Chancellor. Mr Brown is anxious to see his Individual Savings Account (ISA) be a resounding success. Low and transparent charges will help him secure acclaim.

Mr Brown was expected to reform inheritance tax. Surprisingly, he did not do so. Instead of making it more difficult for the wealthy to pass assets to their heirs during their lifetimes, he contented himself with the closing of the Ingram loophole. Lady Ingram gave away her house and its acres away to her family but continued to live in the stately pile.

Despite the protestations of the Inland Revenue, her estate escaped tax. It seems that the Chancellor concluded that the rich will always find a way to avoid inheritance tax.

**Comment**  
Anne Ashworth



Comment  
Anne Ashworth

Crackdown  
the smugg

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999

## Budget 99

11

BY RACHEL KELLY  
PROPERTY CORRESPONDENT

THE abolition of mortgage interest relief at source (Miras) ends one of the middle classes' most cherished perks, although lenders and estate agents said it would have little effect on property sales. The 0.5 per cent increase in stamp duty on properties over £250,000 is expected to slow down the top end of the market. Agents said that prices would not be affected.

Miras will be withdrawn from April 2000, adding about £200 a year to the housing costs of the country's ten million homeowners. The rate has been cut in successive Budgets, and low interest rates that are boosting the housing market will take much of the sting out of its abolition.

Milan Kharri, from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, said: "The abolition of Miras was widely expected, but we would

have preferred a phasing out, reducing it to 5 per cent before abolishing it altogether. Because interest rates are so low, this will dampen the effects of its abolition."

Housing charities welcomed the abolition of Miras, which they say benefited owner-occupiers and pushed up house prices to the exclusion of a vibrant private rented sector.

Richard Best, director of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which sponsored the 1985 Duke of Edinburgh Inquiry into Housing and which recommended the abolition of Miras, said: "We are pleased to see a level playing field between the owner-occupied and the renting sectors of the housing market. This

is a healthy change to the housing market." He said the tax in the 1980s had helped those paying higher rates of tax. "The more tax you paid, the more you were helped. It did not help young people funding their first home."

The average homeowner, with a 70 per cent mortgage of £59,415 on the average-priced house of £85,257, is currently paying £3,949 a year in mortgage payments. Tax relief is at 10 per cent and mortgage rates 7 per cent. When Miras is abolished, the annual repayment will be £4,159 — £20 extra a year, or £17.50 a month, according to Sue Anderson, of the Council of Mortgage Lenders.

She added that abolishing Miras

would have more impact in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the most northerly regions, where house prices were lowest and where tax relief made up a larger proportion of the mortgage.

Households in London will pay an extra 3.7 per cent on their housing costs, up from £5,647 a year with tax relief at 10 per cent, to £5,857 with no tax relief. Households in the North will pay 7.6 per cent more, up from £2,777 a year with tax relief at 10 per cent, to £2,987 a year with no tax relief.

At present there is no stamp duty on properties sold for less than

£60,000. For houses between £60,000 and £250,000, it is 1 per cent; £250,000 to £500,000 2.5 per cent from next week; and over £500,000 3.5 per cent from next week. The increases would leave 96 per cent of property sales unaffected, Mr Khatri said.

Sales in Central London and the Home Counties have already slowed down after earlier increases in stamp duties. In 1997 there were 26,000 homes traded at £30,000 or more, out of a 1.3 million total, according to Inland Revenue figures. For a £250,000 house, there will be £6,250 to pay in stamp duty, while the buyer of a £300,000 property will pay £7,500. Anyone buying a £500,000 property with

3.5 per cent stamp duty will pay £127,500.

Richard Gaynor, from FPD Savills, said that, while the current increases would have little effect on the market, possible future rises to bring Britain's stamp duty in line with the European rate of 5 per cent would affect the market badly.

Miras was introduced in April 1983 under Nigel Lawson's Chancellorship, with the ceiling set at £30,000. Before 1974, all interest on loans for buying or improving a house qualified for tax relief. Under the 1974 Finance Act, introduced when Denis Healey was Chancellor, relief was restricted to a loan ceiling of £25,000.

Since 1983, Miras has been

scaled back substantially. It was withdrawn from home improvements in 1988-99, and in August 1988 multiple tax relief (where unmarried couples buying together could claim relief) was abolished. The higher-rate tax relief was abolished from 1991-92 under Norman Lamont's Chancellorship; from 1994-95, relief was available only at a lower rate of 20 per cent. It was reduced to 15 per cent from April 1995 by Kenneth Clarke and to 10 per cent from April 1996.

If Miras had been increased in line with house price movements since 1983, it would now be providing tax relief up to a ceiling of nearly £90,000. The cost to the Treasury has gradually reduced since 1992. In 1993-94, the cost was £4.3 billion. £3.5 billion in 1994-95, £2.7 billion in 1995-96, an estimated £1.9 billion in 1998-99.

Its abolition will help to fund the introduction of a 10p rate of income

## Miras cut costs £200 a year

## Day of the 20p cigarette draws ever nearer

BY RICHARD DUCE

## TOBACCO &amp; ALCOHOL

THE day of the 20p cigarette moved nearer last night as smokers were hit by the second price increase in six months.

Back in the 1970s, 20p — or four shillings — would have bought a packet of 20 cigarettes. Today, after the Chancellor's increases, the price of a single cigarette is 19.1 pence. City analysts saw the 17.5p immediate increase in the price of a pack of 20 cigarettes as an example of taxation by stealth.

Mr Brown announced in a pre-Budget review last November that prices would rise by 6 per cent and revealed a similar increase yesterday. The move creates an instant half a billion pounds in revenue for the Exchequer. It will be of some cheer to smokers that there will not be another rise until next year's Budget.

Maurice Fitzpatrick, of City accountants Chantrey Vellacott DFK, said: "It really is stealth taxation gone mad."

From 6pm last night the increase also put 7.5p on a packet of small cigars and 9.5p on a 25-gram pack of pipe tobacco.

Cigarette manufacturers had hoped for a cut in duty

while the Chancellor pledged to combat smuggling from the Continent he was encouraging bootleggers by keeping the cost of tobacco high, they said.

The Tobacco Manufacturers' Association said: "By putting cigarette tax up yet again, the Government has demonstrated its head-in-the-sand attitude to the disastrous knock-on effects of the UK's high tobacco tax policy."

A packet of 20 cigarettes will now cost £3.82 compared with £3.62 for a similar packet in France.

Health-smoking lobby welcomed the increase. Clive Bates, director of Action on Smoking and Health, said: "We are very satisfied. When cigarette prices rise, tobacco consumption falls as smokers cut down, give up or never start in response to the price."

The decision to freeze duty on alcohol encountered a frosty response from the Scotch Whisky Association, which, like the tobacco industry, had been hoping for cuts.

The industry is alarmed at a 7 per cent decline in sales as shoppers cash in on cheaper whisky prices in France.

The association said: "The Chancellor made a start in reversing the trend last year by freezing tax and we were hopeful there would be a cut this year. Unfortunately, the situation has remained the same, and the cause of the industry's decline — cross-border shopping — has not been tackled."

The Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association said: "A freeze is very welcome as far as it goes, but as long as the duty differentials between the UK and France remain so high, jobs will go, pubs will close and crime will increase."

## Crackdown on the smugglers

BY STEWART TENDLER  
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

## CUSTOMS BATTLE

A POWERFUL figure is to be appointed by the Government to combat the cross-Channel smuggling of tobacco and alcohol by criminal gangs.

The Treasury announced an independent evaluation of Customs strategy yesterday and said that the Government was losing £1.5 billion a year in duty on tobacco. According to some estimates, the country could also be losing another £1.5 billion per year on smuggled alcohol.

There is speculation that a senior figure from industry or commerce could be recruited to devise and run the evaluation. Customs officials refused to comment yesterday on who would carry out the work, but acknowledged that the evaluation would be independent of Whitehall.

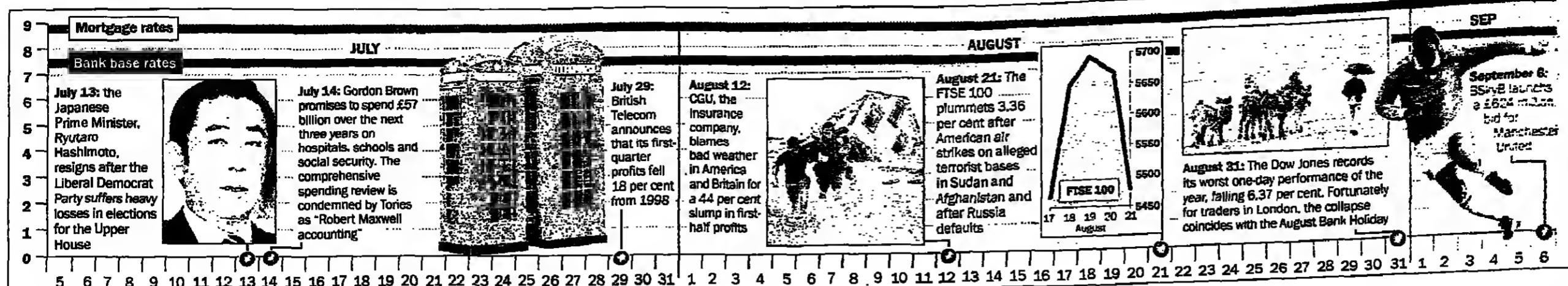
The decision to undertake the evaluation reflects ministers' concerns that, despite increased operations by Customs officials, they have failed to stem the tide. It will particularly target tobacco smuggling, seen as a growth area in Gordon Brown's Compre-



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## Small-car drivers get a £55 bonus

### MOToring AND FUEL

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY  
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

DRIVERS of the smallest cars were handed a £55 reduction in their car tax yesterday as Gordon Brown called for wider use of vehicles that cause less pollution.

Owners of cars with engine sizes below 1100cc will pay annual car tax of £100 from June instead of the new standard rate of £155.

While trimming the tax for smaller cars, Mr Brown announced radical reforms to private and company car taxation, as well as fuel tax increases that make British petrol the most expensive in Europe. Pump prices rose last night above the £3-a-gallon mark

even for the least expensive petrol as the Chancellor continued his five-year plan of increasing petrol tax above the rate of inflation.

He emphasised that drivers of heavily polluting cars faced higher car taxes from next year as vehicle excise duty was linked directly to carbon dioxide levels.

The £55 discount will apply to almost one in ten of the car population. Among cars that will cost £100 a year to tax will be the smallest Ford Fiesta, VW Polo, Citroën Saxo, Mini and Fiat Cinquecento.

The Chancellor made it clear that the reduction would be only the first move in changes that will increase taxes on the least efficient cars. From next year, higher car tax rates

bands, taking the annual car tax for the most polluting cars close to £300. Details of engine sizes or carbon dioxide levels have yet to be decided.

Mr Brown has backed away from his original plan to introduce higher rates of car tax on existing cars according to their engine size. The suggestion prompted widespread anger from motor manufacturers, who claimed that many large-engined cars were much more fuel efficient than older small cars, some of which are among the worst polluters on the road.

Continuing the upward pressure on fuel prices, Mr Brown announced that unleaded petrol will rise by 3.79p a litre, taking average prices to 67.7p a litre (about £3.04p a gallon). Leaded petrol goes up 4.25p a litre to around 74.4p a litre, while diesel rises 6.14p to 71p a litre. The increases took the price of unleaded petrol narrowly ahead of The Netherlands, previously the most expensive country in the EU. The rise was in line with the fuel escalator that raises fuel duty by 6 per cent each year.

Radical changes to introduced to company car taxation include switching charges away from the value of the car to its emissions levels. Some 2.3million company car drivers will be affected by the changes, to be included in legislation next year. At present, company cars are taxed at up to 35 per cent of their cash value, but Mr Brown said that, from 2002, the income tax charged on company cars will be related to emissions of carbon dioxide and possibly other pollutants.

From next year, manufacturers must disclose the carbon dioxide levels of all new cars and Mr Brown believes that this will enable a banded system of



From autumn 2000, all new cars will be taxed according to the amount of carbon dioxide they emit

company car taxation to be introduced.

The Chancellor made no changes to the mileage thresholds of 2,500 and 18,000 miles above which company car drivers pay progressively lower tax rates. However, he reduced the tax discounts available on older company cars and increased the tax levels on free fuel used for private mileage. The changes, he said, would add about £1 a week in tax for

most company car drivers in 2002.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders said the tax changes would "not necessarily hit the gas guzzlers", while Friends of the Earth gave Mr Brown "six out of 10" for his environmental measures.

The Chancellor announced that he would freeze vehicle exercise duties for 98 per cent of lorries, and would reduce the licence fee by £1,000 for lorries and buses that convert their engines to take cleaner diesel.

He also increased the amount paid to local authorities to add rural bus services from £100 million to £120 million over the next two years.

Mr Brown said that employers would not be charged tax when providing subsidised buses, car sharing schemes and other environmentally friendly means of transport to work, such as mileage allowances for cyclists.

## From bicycling to recycling, the taxes are turning green

By NICK NUTTALL  
ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

GREEN reforms in the Budget were aimed at air pollution, global warming and rubbish tips. Patricia Hewitt, Economic Secretary at the Treasury, said that this marked the beginning of ecological tax changes to put the burden on industries that polluted or made intensive use of energy and resources.

The centrepiece is an energy levy on industry. This has yet to be agreed, but will come into force in April 2002. It is intended to cut emissions of global warming gases by 1.5 million tonnes. Alongside tax breaks for less-polluting cars and lorries, the measures should save three million tonnes.

Under agreements signed in 1997 in Kyoto, Japan, Britain is required to reduce global warming gases by 12.5 per cent by 2010. It has a voluntary national target to reduce them by 20 per cent or 36 million tonnes by the same date.

Ms Hewitt said that energy-intensive industries such as steel or chemicals would be allowed to draw up voluntary plans for cutting energy use. There will be help for energy efficient projects.

It is understood that companies that fail to meet these plans, to be submitted soon to the Department of the Environment, will face stiff penalties. Ms Hewitt said that energy-intensive industries will also face some level of energy

tax, no matter how well designed the voluntary plans prove to be. Money raised from the levy will be used to reduce a company's national insurance contributions by 0.5 per cent.

Other key announcements included such subjects as cycling, car-sharing and subsidised buses to work. Last year John Prescott urged companies to draw up travel-to-work plans to reduce air pollution and congestion, but several of the schemes have been taxed as benefits in kind. Boots the Chemist has been given a £500,000 tax bill for a scheme that subsidises 60 buses to bring employees to its Beeston site in Nottinghamshire.

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tips. Ms Hewitt said that the Government intended to send a strong signal to councils, businesses and industry to reduce the contamination of land and water, and to boost the fortunes of recycling.

In the 1998 Budget Mr Brown had announced that the tax on rubbish going to holes in the ground would rise by £7 to £10 a tonne on April 1, 1999. This is now to be increased by £1 a tonne each year from next year until at least April 2004.

Environmental groups had been pressing for an aggregates tax on quarry companies. They claim that a tax would increase the amount of rubble recycled for house and road building and reduce damage to the countryside.

Yesterday the Government shied away from bringing in such a tax, but Ms Hewitt said that it would publish draft legislation on an aggregates tax covering the digging of sand, gravel and hard rock.

She said it would be pressuring industry to develop voluntary policies and that, if the industry failed to draft tough environmental agreements, the Government would bring in an aggregates tax.

Ms Hewitt said that the Department of the Environment was still studying options for a pesticides tax to reduce the level of chemicals sprayed by farmers, industry and councils. The department would be publishing its findings shortly.



On the buses: employers' subsidies will be tax-free

## Relief for 'democracy of giving'

By MARK HENDERSON

EVERY charity in Britain will be allowed to claim an extra £30 on donations of £100 or more from the end of next year.

Thousands of organisations will benefit from a proposed £60 million extension to the Millennium Gift Aid programme, which cut from £250 to £100 the minimum donation that qualifies for tax relief. The move was announced alongside the Budget in the Government's long-awaited Review of Charity Taxation.

While Millennium Gift Aid applied only to charities working on poverty or education projects in the Third World and lasted only to the end of 2000, the

### CHARITIES

new scheme, beginning in January 2001, will include all charitable organisations.

The threshold at which tax reliefs begin could eventually fall still further, and donations made in installments will also qualify.

Gordon Brown said the incentives would promote a new culture of charity. "Instead of charity seen in the old way, the rich bestowing favours on the poor, I want a democracy of giving, where all those who can, help all those who can't," he said.

"Today, in our consultation document

on tax and charities, we propose extending the tax advantages of Millennium Gift Aid."

"We propose that every charity, national and international, should be able to benefit from this new tax relief. We propose in future for every £100 a British citizen donates to any charity, the Government will contribute £30."

The new incentives are needed because charitable giving in Britain has fallen substantially in recent years. Figures from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations show donations have dropped by 31 per cent over five years, with young people becoming especially unlikely to give.

## Sport wins

The Times Sport section covers all aspects of sport, from football and cricket to tennis and golf. We also look at the latest developments in sport science and technology, as well as the social and political issues surrounding sport. Our coverage includes the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, World Cup, Euro Cup, and other major tournaments. We also cover the lives of famous sportsmen and women, and the latest news from the world of sport.

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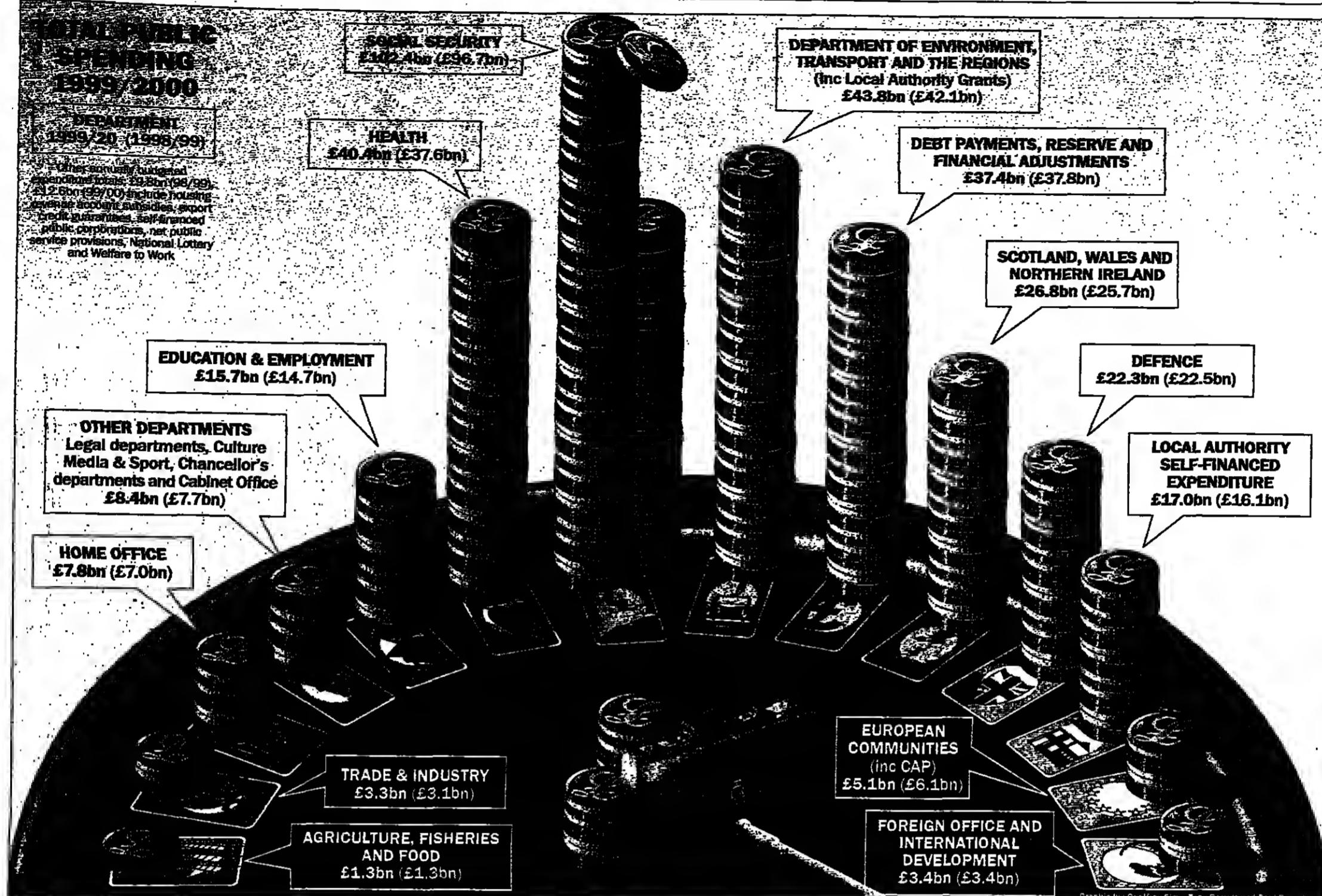
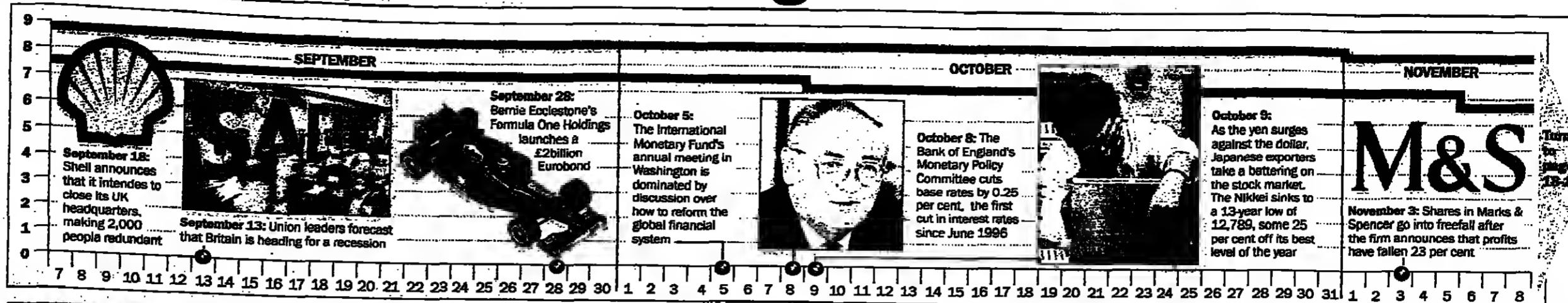
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## Budget 99

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**Tax credit to cut cost of firms' scientific research**

## SCIENCE

By NIGEL HAWKES  
SCIENCE EDITOR

SCIENCE, technology and the generation of wealth played a more prominent part in the Budget than expected.

Mr Brown announced that from next year tax credits for research and development will be introduced to cut the cost of research for small and medium-sized businesses.

For companies making profits, the Treasury says that the tax credit will cut the cost of research and development by 12.5 per cent. For those not yet in taxable profit, the credit will cut the cost by 24 per cent, though it is not yet clear how the credit will work.

The danger from the Treasury's point of view will be that tax accountants will find ways to define all sorts of activities as research and development.

The Chancellor also announced that £100 million would go to the Joint Infrastructure Fund, an initiative launched last July to renew laboratories and equipment in universities. This does not actually appear to be new money, rather the allocation of money already promised to the Higher Education funding Council.

An additional £1 million was earmarked for University Challenge, which provides funds for the best new commercial ventures emerging from universities, represents a 30 per cent increase in funding.

## Cyber Budget offers vision of the future

By JOHN O'LEARY  
AND MARK HENDERSON

GORDON BROWN offered a vision of Britain thriving and connected to the computer revolution.

Tax breaks will encourage up to one million adults to hone their computer skills. Small businesses will benefit from the "e-commerce" made possible by the Internet and high-speed computers, and firms will act as training centres for their workforce under a "Computers For All" loan scheme allowing employees to take computers home.

"Anyone left out of the new knowledge revolution will be left behind in the new knowledge economy," Mr Brown said. Information exchanges — many at cybercafes — will offer the chance to borrow computers and software in the new century the way local libraries have loaned books in the last century.

Mr Brown added: "Our target is a national network of 1,000 computer learning centres, one for every community in Britain. They will be in schools, colleges, libraries, in Internet cafés and on the high street."

The technological revolution

## COMPUTERS

costing almost £2 billion, will help to provide "universal learning at every age". Inner-city schools will receive £100 million to upgrade their technology and there will be £20 million to give more teachers laptops for home use.

Mr Brown focused on the Government's ambition to promote lifelong learning. Hefty discounts would be available for training courses. Up to 100,000 people already opening Individual Learning Accounts will be able to claim 80 per cent discounts on fees for basic education courses, including computer literacy.

In a nod towards the world-beating wealth of the ultimate computer nerd, Bill Gates, Mr

Brown emphasised that Britain could "no longer afford to lag behind America" in technology — "the great driver of world economic growth today".

A £10 million tax credit on research and development will give "new business and small business — the biggest source of innovative ideas — cash to help to research and develop their innovations even before they make their first profits".

Computer experts said that the "cyber Budget" was an ambitious but achievable plan that could bring great economic benefits to Britain.

Chris Godwin, corporate affairs manager at IBM, said:

"Anything that encourages people to develop skills in this area has to be a sound policy because it is effectively playing on our strengths as a nation."



Computer boom time: laptops and PCs for all

## Tables to keep tabs on costs

Investors will be able to compare the true cost of savings, pensions and insurance as league tables of charges are to be published by the Financial Services Authority. The Chancellor said that banks and building societies would be required to publish reliable price information about mortgages.

ball Trust and Labour MP for Stalybridge and Hyde, said the money would allow the trust to deliver "its vital programme of safety and improvement work for Football League clubs and continue its much-needed funding for grassroots football". Littlewoods Pools said that the reduction would allow the company to invest in new technology to raise income by providing every collector with a hand-held computer terminal that will "revolutionise the way that the pools are entered". It would also provide more prizes for punters.

## Sport wins from betting boost

By JOHN GOODBODY  
SPORTS NEWS CORRESPONDENT

GRASSROOTS sport, including many small clubs in the Football League, will benefit from the Government's decision to cut duty on the football pools companies.

As part of the deal, 3 per cent of the increased turnover of the pools will go to the Football Trust and a further 3 per cent to the Foundation for Sport and the Arts until at least March 2002.

The income of the pools companies has been savagely cut since the National Lot-

## POOLS DUTY

ter started in 1994 which has affected the cash given to sporting and artistic projects. In 1993-94, pools turnover was £750 million; last year £250 million.

The announcement by the Chancellor that duty would be reduced from 26.5 per cent to 17.5 per cent delighted sporting organisations, which had lobbied for the pools to be given a more even playing field against the lottery in their battle to attract punters.

Tom Pendry, the chairman of the Foot-



The days of the expensive mortgage are numbered.

See the numbers below.

You can count on us to save you money, as well as shorten the length of your mortgage. Our flexible mortgage allows you to make regular overpayments or lump sum payments to reduce your loan, with no penalties.

As interest is calculated daily, overpayments have an immediate savings advantage. For example, if you pay an extra £50 a month from year 1, on an £80,000 loan, this would pay off a 25 year mortgage 4 years and 5 months earlier. That's a saving of £16,110.42!

To make life easier still, you can choose to take advantage of our fixed rates or opt for our variable rate or a combination of both.

And because we have no high street branches to maintain, we'll pass on the cost benefit to you by consistently offering low interest rates.

Finally, should you have the need, we'll provide a cheque book that gives you access to extra funds to help pay for things like a new car or home improvements. Just call our number now: 0845 845 0829, 8am - 8pm, quoting B/P53, or fill in the coupon.

To Scottish Widows Bank, PO Box 12757, 67 Morrison Street, Edinburgh EH3 8YJ.

Surname: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other

First Name(s)

Address

Postcode

Telephone No. (Work/home)

We will never make your name and address available to other organisations. However, we will occasionally tell you about products and services which we believe will be of interest to you. If you would prefer not to receive this information, please tick this box.

Scottish Widows Bank. Call on 0845 845 0829

Scottish Widows Bank will require a first legal charge (standard security in Scotland and Legal Charge/Mortgage in Northern Ireland) over the property and assignment of an occupiable life policy. Interest rates are correct at 1 March 1999 but may vary and this could affect your repayments. Maximum advance 80% of purchase price or valuation, whichever is lower. Applicants must be aged 18 or over. All lending is subject to appraisal by the Bank of the applicant's financial status and valuation of property. A credit search may be undertaken. Available to Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The property must be fully insured for the duration of the loan. Full details and written quotations are available on request. Typical example based on 80% loan to value for mortgage of £80,000 over 25 years (assuming MIRAS calculated under current tax legislation which may alter) inc Capital and Interest Mortgage - 299 net monthly repayments, £151.64 with a final payment of £156.64. Total charge for credit £178,582. Total amount payable £159,382. Assuming monthly overpayments of £50.00 from year 1 are made, all borrowing will be repaid after 20 years and 7 months. Total charge for credit reducing to £77,906.33. Total amount payable reducing to £157,906.33. Interest Only Mortgage - 299 net payments of £406.40 with a final payment of £180.40. Total charge for credit £125,210. Total amount payable £120,520. For half types of mortgages, the total charge for credit includes - valuers fees £175, collection security fees/replication charge £150, funds transfer charge £10 and security discharge fee £50. Telephone calls may be recorded or monitored. Scottish Widows Bank plc, Company Number 154554, Registered in Scotland having its Registered Office at PO Box 12757, 67 Morrison Street, Edinburgh EH3 8YJ, issued by Scottish Widows Fund and Life Assurance Society which is regulated by the Personal Investments Authority. YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

icy of giving

## THE TIMES Budget jury

# Verdict goes to the 10p surprise

### THE £100,000 COUPLE



**Andrew Thomson, 49, and Janice Thomson, 48, of Purley, South London.**  
**Occupation:** Mrs Thomson is a director of Chelsea Financial Services; Mr Thomson is an administrator there.  
**Annual income:** Mrs Thomson £60,000; Mr Thomson £25,000. Plus bonuses.  
**Children:** Three (15, 17 and 20).  
**Inheritance:** expect modest sum from each set of parents.  
**Home:** own house and freehold, valued at £480,000, with mortgage of £270,000.  
**Personal pension:** he expects £18,000 a year from previous job; her employer puts £180 a month into pension which she hopes will give her £24,000 a year.  
**Investments:** £50,000 in Peps. Vehicles: Company car and two private cars.  
**Hopes and fears:** "Fear further attack on tax credits for pensions and savings. Don't want to see increase in personal taxation. Want increased flexibility in pensions."  
**Politics:** Mrs Thomson, a "left-winger", voted Labour; Mr Thomson, right of centre.  
**Response:** "Inheritance tax [threshold] was raised rather than lowered or abolished. We are not better off but haven't been hit in a lot of ways we thought we would be. It's really only Miras that we've lost out on."



### NURSE



**Louise Griffiths, 26, of Southfields, South London.**  
**Occupation:** staff nurse at Royal Brompton Hospital.  
**Income:** £14,700 a year.  
**Marital status:** single.  
**Home:** private rented accommodation, £450 a month.  
**Personal pension:** paying into NHS pension plan.  
**Vehicle:** Citroen AX  
**Drinks:** average ten units of alcohol per week.  
**Hopes and fears:** "Better nursing conditions with increased NHS budget. An extra penny on tax to go towards NHS. Increase in my wage which reflects role as carer. Reduced petrol prices."  
**Politics:** undecided at last election so did not vote. Leaning towards Liberal Democrats.  
**Effect:** £96.20 a year better off because of 10 per cent tax band. No specific details on pay for nurses but £500 million pledged for NHS emergency units.

### HIGHER-RATE TAXPAYER



**Suniya Basha, 30, of Clapham, South London.**  
**Occupation:** solicitor at Kennedy's commercial litigation firm.  
**Income:** higher-rate taxpayer (more than £35,000 a year).  
**Marital status:** single.  
**Home:** owns one-bed flat worth £130,000.  
**Mortgage:** £10,000.  
**Personal pension:** 5-10 per cent of monthly salary paid into private scheme.  
**Vehicle:** Renault 5.  
**Drinks:** average of 10-14 units of alcohol per week.  
**Hopes and fears:** "Would like to see increase in spending on NHS, education, Mortgage relief and tax would affect me."  
**Response:** "It will work out the same at the end of the day because I lose Miras. I didn't think the Budget would affect me, but I think it's a sensible Budget. I liked the tone of it."  
**Effect:** £275 a year better off because of increase in personal allowance.

### DIRECTOR WITH COMPANY CAR



**Marcus and Joanna Smith, 39 and 35, of Wimbledon, South London.**  
**Occupation:** Mr Smith is a director of Shandwick public relations consultancy; Mrs Smith is a housewife.  
**Children:** Charlie, 6, Jamie, 4, Ben, 1.  
**Income:** higher-rate tax payer (more than £35,000).  
**Inheritance:** possible sum to come from Mrs Smith's parents. Trust funds set up for all three children.  
**Home:** own four-bedroom house and freehold, valued at £350,000.  
**Personal pension:** Mr Smith is in his company scheme.  
**Investments:** shares. Peps and Tessa.  
**Vehicle:** Volvo (company-owned) worth £20,000.  
**Drinks:** wine with supper — about 25 units of alcohol per week between them.  
**Hopes and fears:** "Make substantial commitment to research and development sector. Tax breaks for companies in that sector and try to innovate. Expect to be clobbered on company car but realise it's necessary."  
**Politics:** both have always voted Labour.  
**Effect of Budget:** the Smiths are about £500 a year better off, mainly because of the change in income-tax rates. They also benefit from the higher threshold for capital gains tax.  
**Reaction:** "Broadly I give it the thumbs up. It's good news for business and for families, although I will be hit by the erosion of allowances. My shareholdings are fairly small so I don't regard the CGT and IHT increase as major differences. The increase in petrol doesn't surprise me. It's part of a wider package of environmental measures which the Government needs to tackle."

### SINGLE MOTHER



**Joanne Bergin, 35, of Northfleet, Kent.**  
**Occupation:** single mother to Laura, 10.  
**Income (from benefits):** £68.80 a week income support and £17.10 family allowance, of which £11.45 is child benefit and £5.65 is a single parent's allowance.  
**Marital status:** single.  
**Home:** council flat, rent of £200 a month covered by housing benefit.  
**Personal pension:** No.  
**Hopes and fears:** "My hopes are that the Budget will be fair to single mums. I would like to see benefit for single parents go up but I don't really see that happening as they haven't reversed any of the benefits the Conservatives did away with."  
**Politics:** strongly anti-Con-

servative and voted Labour in the last election.

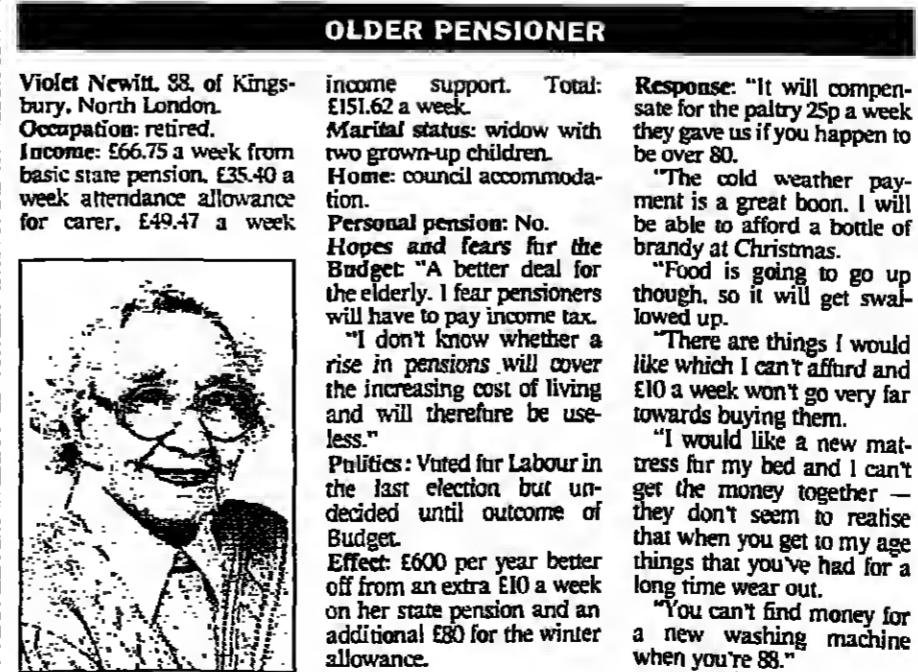
**Effect of Budget:** better off by £3 a week after child benefit rose to £15 per week. No other changes outside rate of inflation.

**Response:** "The Budget is benefiting people with children if they are married and in work. It's rewarding people who are tiring the party line."

"It doesn't make much difference to me at the moment but if I go back to work soon, which I'm planning to do, then it will make a difference because of the 10 per cent tax rate. That's a big incentive for me in work."

"Realistically, I knew they wouldn't do anything for single parents."

### OLDER PENSIONER



**Violet Newitt, 88, of Kingsbury, North London.**  
**Occupation:** retired.  
**Income:** £66.75 a week from basic state pension, £35.40 a week attendance allowance for carer, £49.47 a week

income support. Total: £151.62 a week.

**Marital status:** widow with two grown-up children.  
**Home:** council accommodation.

**Personal pension:** No.

**Hopes and fears for the Budget:** "A better deal for the elderly. I fear pensioners will have to pay income tax."

"I don't know whether a rise in pensions will cover the increasing cost of living and will therefore be useless."

**Politics:** Voted for Labour in the last election but undecided until outcome of Budget.

**Effect:** £600 per year better off from an extra £10 a week on her state pension and an additional £80 for the winter allowance.

### Picture and research team

The main picture of *The Times* jury was taken by Peter Nicholls, who used a MAMIYA 645 camera, in studio conditions, a 55mm lens, aperture of f16.5 on Ilford FP4 film.

Additional pictures: Paul Rogers.

Research by: Susie Steiner, Alex Frean, Elizabeth Judge, Alex O'Connell, Paula Hawkins, Karen Woolfson and Suzie Kew.

## Viewers find in Brown's favour

By ROBIN YOUNG

If THE reactions of *The Times* focus group are typical of the way the Budget was received by the viewing public, then the Chancellor scored a palpable, though somewhat unimpressive, success.

Having been led by many experts to expect a steady-as-you-go and boring Budget, the focus group found themselves watching a speech larded almost to bursting with superlatives. Everything the Chancellor announced appeared to be the lowest, the first, the best, the most favourable or the most generous.

It cannot be said that our group followed his galloping giveaway speech (or his crafty clawback swipes) with quite the rapt attention and carefully adjusted eyebrows achieved by Tony Blair sitting at Mr Brown's side.

Nor could they quite match the prim delight captured in the expression of the Chancellor's other neighbour, Margaret Beckett. Our audience, watching a wall-size screen in a conference room in Times House, listened with extreme respect and a complete absence of cynical banter.

Even Violet Newitt, 88, listened in almost unbroken silence to the Chancellor's incessant flow of fiscal information. Only when he reached the bit about local authorities lending computers in the next century like libraries lent books in the past, did she finally lean forward and pronounce with satisfaction: "That's good."

The Chancellor got his first laugh when he told "those with an interest in European issues" that Britain's finances were "now well within the Maastricht criteria".

There was also a titter for his little traps laid for Tory hecklers, like saying it would not be prudent to introduce the 10p starting rate of income tax in 2000 and then announcing that it would be brought in this year instead.

The biggest laugh came when the Chancellor mentioned that the vocational tax relief he was phasing out had been going to benefit people taking such things as diving and flying lessons.

The group also appreciated the Chancellor's exposure of the married couple's allowance as something that did not apply only to the married, or to couples, and which was not really an allowance, but was now so confused that it could actually be doubled in value in a year of separation.

Mr Brown may be a dour kind of fellow, but he not only beat Gladstone for one. He beat him for jokes, too.

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Mr Brown may be a dour kind of fellow, but he not only beat Gladstone for one. He beat him for jokes, too.

£150 grant for work-related training.  
Response: "It's not a big difference, is it? It will all go on petrol. I would like to receive computer training, though, for the administration work I do as a barrister's clerk. At least I can go out and have a drink on the Chancellor."



### RETIRED COUPLE

Alfred and Pam Fisher, both 65, of Rickmansworth, in Hertfordshire.

**Occupation:** Mr Fisher is a retired stained-glass artist; Mrs Fisher is a retired teacher.

**Children:** Five grown-up children, all left home.

**Home:** £160,000 three-bedroom house and freehold with no mortgage.

**Pensions:** Currently drawing £15,000 a year from private pension schemes. £5,000 from investments and £69-a-week state pension each; Mrs Fisher's pension is £7,000 a year.

**Investments:** PEP and bonds

**Vehicle:** Subaru estate (privately owned)

**Drinks:** Both of wine with supper — 25 to 30 units alcohol a week between them.

**Hopes and fears:** "Hope there won't be an increase in petrol tax and no rise in tax base. Concerned about long-

term care proposals. Don't want to see money disappearing rapidly if hospitalised or need care."

**Politics:** Centre; voted Liberal Democrat in last election.

**Effect of the Budget:** The Fishers are £900 a year better off, mainly because of the increase in pensioners' personal allowances by £310 each and the increase in state benefit from £69 to £78 per week.

**Reaction:** "I am pleased with the increase in the state pension, because it was extremely low, and that the married couples' allowance won't be abolished for pensioners. The increase in petrol was a bit of a blow. I liked the Budget as a whole as it helps families, schools and people who have small cars, though we don't have one. There was no increase in tax on spirits and wines which was good. Overall it was forward-thinking."



### MIDDLE MANAGER

Joanna Pettigrew, 24, of Battersea, South London.

**Occupation:** Estate agent with Kinleigh Folard & Hayward.

**Home:** rents room in two-bed flat, sharing with owner, at £460 pcm.

**Income:** £24,000 pa (of which £12,500 is commission-based)

**Personal pension:** No

**Vehicle:** Golf GTI (company-owned)

**Annual business mileage:** 10,000

**Smokes:** 5-10 cigarettes a day

**Drinks:** average 10 units of alcohol a week

**Hopes and fears:** "I am hoping they will reduce tax on company perks such as cars and mobile phones."

**Politics:** Rightwing. Voted Conservative in last election.

**Effect of the Budget:** Jo is about £98 better off per year. Her income tax bill



### NEW DEAL EMPLOYEE

Michael Rochford, 20, of Kennington, South London.

**Occupation:** barrister's clerk, employed under New Deal.

**Income:** £8,500 a year, of which £3,000 subsidised by the Government.

**Marital status:** single.

**Home:** lives at home with family.

**Personal pension:** No.

**Vehicle:** moped (Typhoon 125).

**Hopes and fears for the Budget:** "Concerned that the New Deal will get less funding, then people like me will not get a chance. Petrol dudges are also a concern."

**Political leanings:** has not voted, but would vote Labour.

**Effect of Budget:** £98.20 a year better off because of increased personal allowance and 10 per cent tax band. Could also benefit from

£150 grant for work-related training.

Response: "It's not a big difference, is it? It will all go on petrol. I would like to receive computer training, though, for the administration work I do as a barrister's clerk. At least I can go out and have a drink on the Chancellor."

### DISABLED WORKER

Daniel Batten, 26, of Arsenal, North London.

**Occupation:** editorial assistant for *Disability Now* newspaper.

**Income:** £15,000 a year plus £54.40 per month disability living allowance for cerebral palsy.

**Marital status:** single.

**Home:** rents a two-bed council flat for £260 pcm.

**Personal pension:** pays 3 per cent of his monthly salary into Scope pension scheme.

**Contributions:** are matched by Scope, which owns the magazine.

**Drinks:** about 15 units of alcohol a week.

**Hopes and fears:** "That pensions get a boost and people on low incomes get help through tax cuts."



**tion** "because I didn't recognise Labour in its present guise".

**Effect of the Budget:** Daniel will be £98.20 a year better off.

**Disability allowance** likely to rise with inflation. No specific announcement from the Chancellor.

**Reaction:** "It was pretty interesting that he did not mention a single thing about disability."

"It's very nice to have an extra £100 in your pocket but I'm just worried about five to ten years' time."

"I think it's going to come crashing down because making tax cuts frightens me."

"All we can really thank him for is the extra bottles of beer."

### DRINKER AND SMOKER

Elliot Reith, 29, of Borehamwood, Hertfordshire.

**Occupation:** plumber and drainage engineer.

**Income:** £16,000 a year.

**Marital status:** single with two children, Jade, 7, and Connor, 4, from previous relationship.

**Home:** owns £60,000 house with £88,000 mortgage.

**Personal pension:** £50 per month into private scheme.

**Vehicles:** BMW and a Volkswagen van.

**Annual business mileage:** around 30,000.

**Smokes:** 10 cigarettes a day.

**Drinks:** 20 units per week.

**Hopes and fears:** "I'd like to see petrol taxes come down, income tax a concern."

**Politics:** voted Labour.

**Effect of Budget:** £105.20 per week better off due to



**changes in income tax bands** but worse off by about £10 a week on petrol.

**Response:** "It's a very good idea to have a tax cut but they didn't do enough to make any difference."

### SMALL BUSINESS OWNER

John Brandler, 44, of Brentwood, in Essex.

**Occupation:** art dealer and owner of Brandler Galleries, employing two staff, with turnover of just under £500,000.

**Income:** gallery makers average profit of £40,000 pa plus £35,000 from personal art dealing.

**Marital status:** living with partner; no children.

**Inheritance:** parents in their 80s, so possible sum to come.

**Home:** has lived with partner for 18 years in her own house; no mortgage.

**Personal pension:** pays £250 monthly into private pension scheme.

**Investments:** PEPs, some shares and savings account.

**Vehicle:** Volvo estate (privately owned). Owns car park for

on petrol duty."

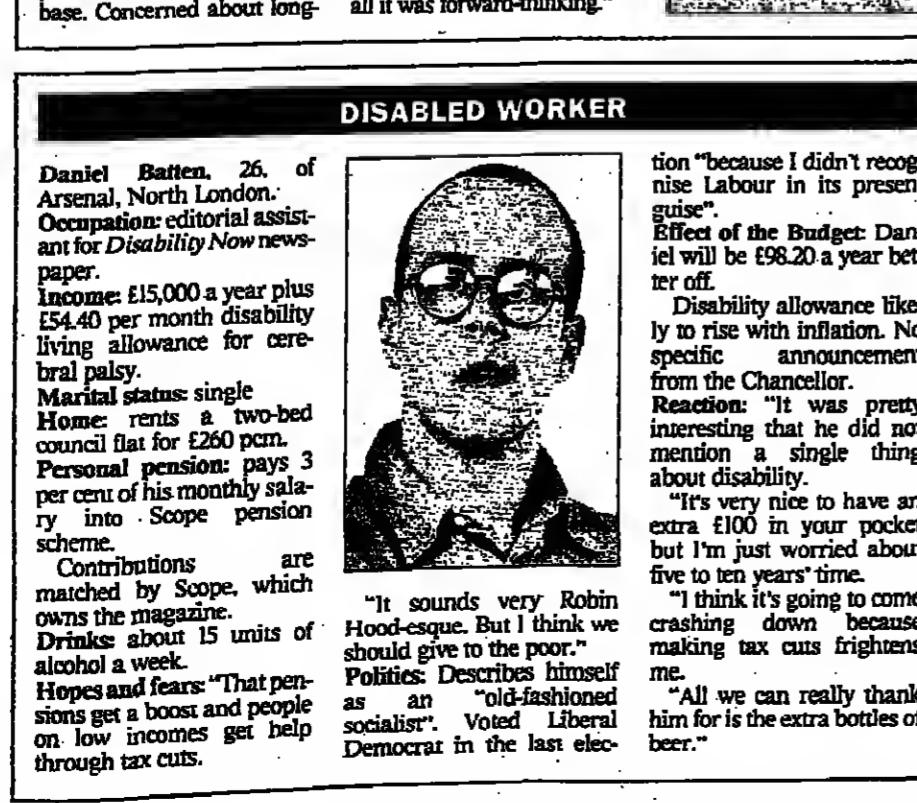
**Politics:** Conservative with small 'c'. Voted Labour in last election but regretting it.

**Effect of the Budget:** business will be £1,775 a year better off through drop in corporation tax but will not feel benefit until 2001.

**Response:** "This Budget will create more government jobs."

"It's not going to simplify anything for the small businessman. I get so many forms from the Government to fill in. He should have simplified the paperwork."

"It will free up more funds to encourage younger artists. I can spend that money on more speculative purchases. It will encourage me to take risks. That's what this Budget was all about."



**clients at gallery.**

**Annual business mileage:** up to 12,000.

**Hopes and fears:** "Hoping for lower import VAT. Would like to see abolition of road tax and equivalent pur-

# Britain should mark millennium 'by making 2000 the giving year'

This is an edited text of the Chancellor's Budget statement yesterday.

## CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH

Today's Budget is a Budget for Britain to succeed in the new economy and lead in the new century: a Budget that builds on a strong foundation of economic stability, advances a modern framework of efficient public services and encourages a dynamic Britain of enterprise and fairness.

With this, the last Budget of the 20th century, we also leave behind the century-long sterile conflicts between the governments of the Left that have too often undervalued enterprise and wealth creation — and governments of the Right too often indifferent to public services and fairness.

In contrast this is a Budget built on the central idea that our future depends on enterprise and fairness together. Because enterprise and fairness are founded on securing sound economic fundamentals, this Budget looks in monetary and fiscal stability for the long term.

Because enterprise and fairness depend on modern public services, we are not only providing the £40 billion extra we promised to health and education but today I will announce more money and more capital investment in schools, hospitals, transport and fighting crime.

Because for too long the tax system has undervalued entrepreneurship and investment, we will cut taxes on enterprise. And we will champion the needs of small business and introduce a new competition policy and a new computer strategy for Britain.

Because for too long the tax system has undervalued the family, failing to reward those who take on the most important responsibility of all — bringing up children — we will cut taxes for families, helping parents when they need help most.

### STABILITY

Two years ago Britain faced the threat of rapidly rising inflation. So our first priority, and our continuing obligation, has been and is to build a solid foundation of economic stability. Our forecast is for inflation of 2.5 per cent this year, next year and the year after. For the

first time in our generation, Britain can look forward to sustained low inflation.

In our first week in government, we made the Bank of England independent, freezing monetary policy from political control. Now, because together we are steering a course of stability, long-term interest rates have come down from over 7 per cent in May 1997 to 4.5 per cent — our lowest long-term interest rates in over 40 years.

I can confirm our growth estimate for 1999 of 1 per cent to 1.5 per cent, which is what I told the House in November, followed by stronger growth — in 2000 of 2.25 to 2.75 per cent and then in 2001 of 2.75 to 3.25 per cent.

Despite world conditions, more men and women are in jobs than at any time in our history, and unemployment in the last year has been at its lowest rate for 20 years. And because more lone parents are now in work, the numbers claiming out-of-work benefit — rising for 30 years, over one million when we took office — have now fallen by nearly 100,000.

As we entered office we inherited a budget deficit of £28 billion. We said in our manifesto we would work within the existing spending plans for our first two years.

In our first year the deficit was reduced by £19 billion. In my Budget last year, I promised we would reduce the deficit further.

As a result of our prudence, our first two years' spending is £2 billion lower than the spending plans we inherited. This year, the Budget will be in surplus. The current surplus this year is forecast to be £4 billion. And public sector borrowing will be in surplus by £1 billion — in contrast to the £28 billion deficit we inherited.

I have had to offset the impact of slower world growth on our corporate tax revenues.

For the coming five years, the estimated current Budget surplus totals plus £34 billion — in contrast with the last Government's deficit over the last economic cycle of minus £149 billion and the last Government's doubling of the national debt.

So, as we cut debt payments and the bills of economic failure, I will further lock in the fiscal tightening we have achieved over the last two years. I will continue to meet

our fiscal rules, and I am also able, with my Budget measures today, to boost purchasing power over the next three years by £6 billion at exactly the right time for the economy.

Even after these measures take effect, public sector net borrowing will be lower than previously forecast in each of the next three years — at £3 billion in the coming year, and then £1.3 and £4 billion in the years after.

And for those who take a special interest in European issues — in particular the Maastricht Treaty — I can confirm that Britain is well within the Maastricht criteria.

I have often told this House that our prudence is for a purpose. And so I am now able to announce a new boost to purchasing power of £6 billion over the next three years as a result of my Budget measures: net tax cuts of £4 billion targeted to working families; and on top of that, for families and public spending, more than £2 billion of additional public investments.

And I will also today announce major allocations from our £2.5 billion Capital Modernisation Fund, adding more resources to the extra £40 billion we have already committed to invest in health and education over the next three years.

### ENTERPRISE

Britain must make a quantum leap in skills, innovation, competition, information technology and small business. So today, we bring forward seven major reforms for a new enterprise economy open to all.

■ First, tax cuts for business.

So that more businesses — large and small — will invest,

grow and prosper, so that the many and not just the few will have the chance of starting businesses, we today cut business taxes, and introduce a special enterprise management incentive scheme to reward the risk takers.

I confirm that from April 1 we will further reduce the main rate of corporation tax from 31p to 30p, the lowest rate in the history of British corporation tax, the lowest rate of any major country in Europe and the lowest rate of any major industrialised country anywhere, including Japan and the United States.

When we came into Government, small companies tax was 23p. In my first Budget, to encourage enterprise and investment, we reduced it to 21p, backdated to April 1997. From April this year the rate will be 20p: 350,000 companies will benefit.

I believe the whole House will want to welcome what I announce today — a new starting tax rate for small business of 10p in the pound. Every company making profits up to £50,000 will benefit.

The legislation will ensure that the beneficiaries are genuinely those who take risks.

And 85 per cent of the firms

gaining from the new 10p tax rate have fewer than ten employees — the very firms we most want to see grow. The very firms whose growth will create the greatest number of new jobs.

Where we inherited busi-

ness tax rates of 33p and 20p,

the rates will now be 30, 20 and 10.

I am particularly keen to

strengthen the ability of manu-

facturing industry to invest in

new equipment and new tech-

nology with targeted tax ad-

vantages for doing so. And so I

will set aside an additional

£325 million to allow small

and medium-sized companies

to write off 40 per cent of all

they invest in the coming year.

In other areas I am extend-

ing the tax allowance for new

films made in Britain. And the

shipping industry has put to

me the case for enhanced train-

ing incentives and for a lower

rate ring-fenced tonnage tax.

■ Second, I propose a tax re-

form that will reward risk and

stimulate new enterprise at

the cutting edge of technology.

In the past, share option

schemes, subsidised by the tax

payer, have rewarded those al-

ready at the top whose risks

are low and rewards already

high — such as utility chief ex-

ecutives often operating in a

monopoly environment.

Tomorrow I will publish de-

tails of a very different kind of

targeted tax cut for those who

are prepared to move from se-

cure jobs and venture their



### ON EUROPE

**‘Britain is well within the Maastricht criteria’**

time and effort to create wealth for our country. The new enterprise management incentive will allow the award of equity worth up to £100,000 for success in building up the new path-breaking companies our economy needs.

I now announce the level at which capital gains tax will begin. There is no requirement for me to raise the threshold. But I have decided to do so.

For all individuals, from April, the first £1,000 will be free of capital gains tax. This measure will exempt 10,000 more people from capital gains tax altogether. Britain now has the lowest long-term rate of capital gains tax with the most generous threshold in its history.

I now turn to the rate and threshold for inheritance tax. The rate will be unchanged and fewer people will pay the tax as I raise the threshold by £8,000 to £231,000. Ninety-nine per cent of estates will now be exempt from tax.

■ Third, targeted tax cuts and public investment to put Britain and British enterprise at the forefront of innovation. I propose a new R&D tax credit which will give new business and small business — the biggest source of innovative ideas — cash help to research and develop their innovations even

grading of British science.

To transform British inventions into British-made products, I propose employee shares for all. Employees will be able, for the first time, to buy shares in their own companies from their pre-tax income. Every employer will be able to match, tax-free, what each employee buys.

■ Seventh, new targeted tax cuts and public investment to equip all our companies and all our people for the newest and most decisive economic

books in the last century.

From this year a million men and women will start to receive £150 to set up their own Individual Learning Accounts — putting the power to plan and prepare for their own careers in their own hands. In this Budget we expand Individual Learning Accounts and open up tax-free learning in computers, in basic skills and advanced skills, to millions more. We will legislate so that employers will be able to contribute tax-free to the new Individual Learning Accounts. Employees will also pay no tax on such payments.

Any adult with an Individual Learning Account will be able to claim a discount of 20 per cent, an additional grant of up to £100, on the cost of their learning. For all adults signing up to improve on their basic education — including computer literacy — there will be a discount of 80 per cent on course fees.

And we will pay for this by phasing out existing Vocational Tax Relief which has been subsidising non-vocational courses like diving and flying lessons.

### ENVIRONMENT

Our Government's target is to reduce greenhouse emissions by 12.5 per cent by 2010. And today I will announce a programme of measures that will cut carbon pollution by 3 million tonnes.

My first proposal alone will reduce carbon pollution by 1.5 million tonnes. We will introduce a levy on business use of energy from April 2001. And it will be brought in on a revenue-neutral basis, with no overall increase in the burden of taxation on business. Because we intend at the same time to cut the main rate of employers' national insurance contributions from 12.2 to 11.7 per cent.

We also intend to set significantly lower rates of tax for energy intensive sectors that improve their energy efficiency. Today we are inviting them to submit their proposals. In pursuit of our policies for sustainable development we will also allocate an extra £50 million to encourage business to invest in new environmental technologies and in renewable fuels.

In line with the fuel escalator first introduced by the previous Government at 5 per cent above inflation and now 6 continued on facing page

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At a cost of £150 million a year, this targeted tax cut will underwrite almost one third of research and development costs for small business. Britain now has one of the best incentives for innovation anywhere in the industrialised world.

The seedbed is basic science. I can announce a £100 million new investment in university science laboratories and equipment, part of our £1 billion up-

challenge of the 21st century — mastering information technologies from the PC to the internet, from e-mail to e-commerce.

So today, we allocate an additional £0.5 billion from our Capital Modernisation Fund to launch a £1.7 billion computers for all initiative, a nationwide effort enlisting schools, colleges and companies, public and private sectors across the board to make Britain a leader in the information economy. Our target is a national network of 1,000 computer learning centres, one for every community in Britain.

Our targets for the new economy are ambitious. Within three years, one million small businesses able to benefit from e-commerce, 32,000 schools connected to the internet, with 370,000 teachers computer-trained. New help worth £20 million making it possible for more teachers to have computers for home use.

To bring more computers into more British homes, we will legislate so that employees will be able to borrow computers from their companies as a tax-free benefit. We will pioneer a system under which local partnerships will be able to loan computers and software in the new century the way local libraries have loaned

JP Laffaud

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 10

**Budget 99**

cycling  
green

From facing page  
per cent, petrol duty will rise from 6pm today. Vehicle Excise Duty for smaller cars will, from June 1 this year, be cut by £5 — the first cut in the licence fee in 50 years. Other cars' rates are only increased in line with inflation.

I will freeze Vehicle Excise Duties for 98 per cent of all lorries, and for lorries and buses with clean engines I am cutting the licence fee by up to £1,000.

Last year, to encourage a switch to cleaner fuels, I promised to give an additional tax advantage to ultra-low sulphur diesel. By the end of the year almost all producers will have switched to this cleaner fuel. This alone will cut emissions by 20 per cent. At a revenue cost of over £400 million a year I will maintain the favourable tax treatment for cleaner diesel.

I propose a reform to reward the use of fuel-efficient company cars and remove today's counter-productive incentive to drive more miles in order to get bigger discounts. So I start in this Budget with a measure that will cost the company car user with a typical car around £1 a week. This reform — to link tax to emissions — will be implemented in 2002 on a revenue-neutral basis.

Further, to reduce pollution, employers will from this year be able for the first time to secure tax-free the benefits from employer-run or employer-subsidised buses, car-sharing schemes and other environmentally-friendly means of transport to work.

Last year we set up a new rural transport fund. To build on its success in extending the range of public transport services in rural communities we will now increase funding for the next two years by 20 per cent to £120 million. To reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, the landfill tax £10 per tonne in 1999, will, in future, rise by £1 per tonne per year.

Taking into account all these tax changes and all the changes I have yet to announce there will be a net tax cut of £4 billion in this Budget.

**FAMILIES**

Children are 20 per cent of the British people but 100 per cent of Britain's future. To build that future, this Budget provides a better deal for families and children. So we will re-

place the married couple's allowance with a new family tax cut that will increase the amount that goes to help families with children. This children's tax credit will give more — not less — help to families at the time they need it most, when they have their children and when their children are growing up.

Today's pensioner couples will retain the married couple's allowance. And couples without children or whose children have grown up will benefit from other changes I will shortly announce.

The married couple's allowance is now worth £190 to married couples. The children's tax credit, the tax cut for families, to be introduced from April 2001, will be worth £416, and as a result the typical family with children will be over £200 a year better off.

In the Budget last year I set down the two principles that govern my approach: that we must substantially increase support for families with children and we must do so in the fairest way.

It is in fulfillment of these two principles that the children's tax credit will be tapered away for the higher-earning family where there is a top-rate taxpayer.

In the light of this reform, my Budget decision is that child benefit will not be taxed for taxpayers on the basic rate — or the top rate. When we came to power, child benefit for the first child was £11.45 a week. Next month it will rise to £14.40 a week. It has risen by 25 per cent since we came to Government — an increase of £150 a year.

I now propose a further increase in child benefit, well above the rate of inflation. It will rise next April to £15 a week for the first child, £780 a year. I will also raise the rate for the second and further children to £10 a week. With the children's tax credit added to child benefit, families who were receiving £11 a week in

1997 for their first child will be receiving £23 a week, £1,200 a year. And taking all our reforms together the maximum support for the first child will be £40 a week, £2,000 a year for families when they need it most. Every child in the country in every family will get more — not less — support under this system, support ranging from £780 a year to £2,000 a year. And every child will receive more every year.

Our long-term goal is to bring together the different strands of our support for children in the working families tax credit, in income support and in our children's tax credit and create an integrated and seamless system of child financial support paid to the mother, building upon the foundation of universal child benefit.

I have also considered the alternative case that has been advocated, for a transferable tax allowance for mothers who stay at home. The better deal for mothers who stay at home is what we are doing from October this year — the working families tax credit.

A family with two children on £15,000 a year where the mother stays at home, would have received nothing under the old system of family credit. Transferable tax allowances would give them £97. Under the working families tax credit they will receive £140.

Where both parents need to work, we need to do more to help them balance the demands of making a living and having children.

With a million new childcare places now being created and from October our new childcare tax credit set at a maximum of £70 for one child and £105 for two children, Britain has a national childcare strategy for the first time in our history.

I can announce today that we will do more. The winter allowance is currently paid to all eight million elderly households at £20. I have decided to raise it — to £100 — for all eight million elderly households. To help the elderly get more out of their savings I have asked National Savings to issue a new pensioners bond. With the shortest term de

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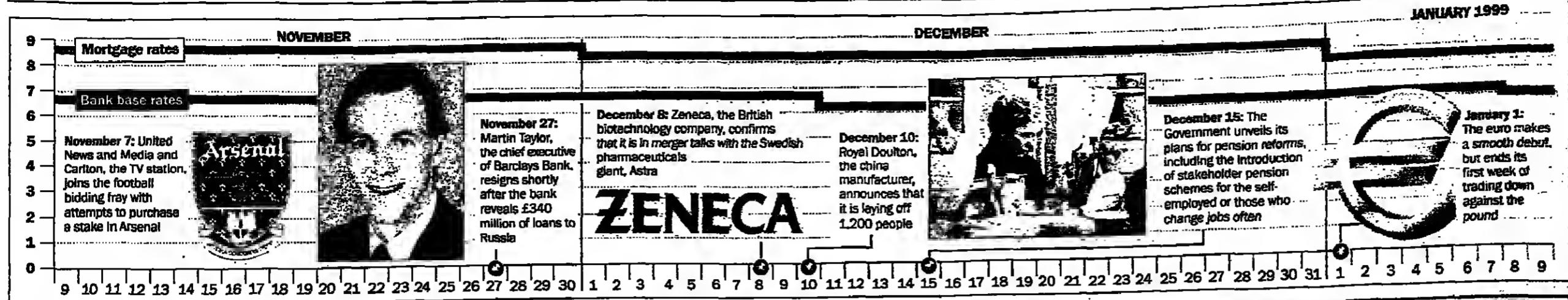
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## Hague attacks 'stealthy tax' on businesses

### THE OPPOSITION REPLY

By MARK INGLEFIELD  
POLITICAL REPORTER

WILLIAM HAGUE accused Gordon Brown of being a "pickpocket Chancellor" who was raising taxes by stealth.

While the Tory leader welcomed some of the new measures, including the reduction in the standard rate of income tax, he accused the Chancellor of punishing savers and paralysing business with new taxes and regulations.

"He is the pickpocket Chancellor who shakes your hand with a smile after he has stealthily removed your wallet," Mr Hague said in his immediate Commons reaction to Mr Brown's budget.

"As we already know, this is a Government that says one thing and does another, that takes a pound and gives a few pennies back."

The Tory leader criticised the Government for failing to cut welfare bills, and complained that he had not introduced a programme to curb union power and to increase labour market flexibility.

"He should have been attacking the forest of regulation that is strangling business, but he didn't," he said.

Mr Hague added that experts would be "astonished" by Mr Brown's forecasts for GDP growth.

"Behind the statistics of an economic slowdown, we see families under pressure, businesses struggling in a manufacturing sector which you will have further hit to-day," he said.

But Mr Hague welcomed the Government's plan to introduce research and development credits.

while emphasising that the Tories would want to examine the details behind the scheme.

Mr Hague contradicted the Chancellor's assertion that the Budget would benefit families, saying: "It is good for families who don't have a mortgage, who aren't married, who don't run a car, who don't smoke, who don't save for a pension. There may even be a family-like that somewhere in the country. Sounds suspiciously like me."

Paddy Ashdown, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, said that Mr Brown could have done "big things" in the Budget, but had decided instead "to follow a scattergun approach and do a number of smaller things".

Mr Ashdown accused the Chancellor of mounting a "selective smash-and-grab raid" on his party's ideals, but said the Budget had not gone far enough in tackling poverty. "Over this Parliament, the Government would have invested less in health and education than the Tories originally intended," he said.

Mr Hague accused the Prime Minister of "a total betrayal" for admitting last week that the tax burden would rise, despite his pre-election pledge that it would not.

To Mr Brown he said: "The truth after three budgets is that the total of taxation is still rising and you didn't have the guts in the Budget speech to say so. You are not only an expert on stealth taxes, you are an expert on giving a stealth speech."

Referring to Mr Blair's assertion that he wanted the British economy to be more like the American one, Mr Hague said: "Where is the American dream? Where is the radical plan to reduce welfare bills? So far you have added £4 billion to welfare bills. America is cutting its welfare bills."

"The bad news from today's Budget is that you are still onkering, that the whole of business in



Mr Hague accused the Chancellor of increasing the taxpayer's burden and paralysing business with new taxes and regulations

## Keeping tabs on kitchen table Conservatism

### Tim Hames on how Hague met his voter-friendly targets

**the school run.** His prolonged analysis of the declining savings ratio may have sent eyes swivelling around the kitchen table. A passionate analysis of the shipping industry's difficulties might have been similarly received.

**Listening.** Accused the Chancellor of not listening much to industry. Intimated that he was closer to the concerns of ordinary families.

**Accessible language.** The Tory leader stuck carefully to his simple formula: a strong emphasis on the "persecution" of the motorist, especially those doing

**Future not past.** No real indication of what the Tories would have done if he were in power. Did spent a seemingly excessive amount of time savaging the 1997 and 1998 budgets. **Concede and move on.** Unclear whether or not he thought that the last Tory Government had been wrong to run down mortgage interest tax relief and the married couples allowance or whether Gor-

don Brown was incorrect in completing that process.

**Keep a sense of proportion.** Hyperbole broadly under control. Although he did claim that Mr Brown's savings policy was "an emerging disaster" and that taxes on businesses and people were "soaring". A curious mixed metaphor about "forests" of regulation "strangling" enterprise.

**Integrity.** Strongly hinted that neither the Prime Minister nor the Chancellor has any.

## Tax on tobacco helps to pay for better deal for pensioners

continued from page 17  
positions that pensioners want, this new bond will offer the returns that pensioners need.

And for pensioners I have decided to raise the personal tax allowance in excess of inflation. Single pensioners will not pay any tax until they have an income of £5,720. Older pensioner couples who both use their personal allowances to the full will now not pay tax until they have incomes above £15,000; 200,000 more pensioners will not have to pay income tax. Now, in total, two thirds of pensioners will not have to pay income tax.

Taken together the measures I have already announced add up to an additional £3 billion, a better deal for the elderly that makes the typical pensioner household £240 a year better off.

To help pay for this, from today excise duty on tobacco will rise by the normal escalator, 5 per cent above inflation. Organised smuggling, which is now a £1.5 billion pound a year racket, will not be permitted under policy on cigarettes which successive British Governments have adopted for good and urgent health reasons. As the

Government strengthens its anti-smuggling strategy, we will target new resources to detect, prevent and punish this costly form of organised crime. I have decided to freeze the duty on spirits, on beer and on wine at its current level.

**ON ELDERLY**  
**'The typical pensioner household will be £240 a year better off'**

There will be no tax rise on alcohol this side of the millennium.

And I will cut the tax on pools from March 28 by one third, from 26.5 per cent down to 17.5 per cent. On this basis the pools companies have agreed future funding of

around £20 million a year for the Football Trust and the Foundation for Sport and the Arts.

Insurance premium tax will rise by 1p in the pound from July 1, although 80 per cent of insurance underwritten in Britain will remain exempt.

On VAT, today I propose there will be no increase in rates and no extension of VAT.

I have also decided to make no change to stamp duty on property sales up to £250,000. For property sales above that, the rates will be reduced by 0.3 per cent from next Tuesday.

The Prime Minister has rightly called for our age to become a Giving Age. I want us to mark the Millennium in the best way, by making 2000 the giving year.

In the last Budget we introduced Millennium Gift Aid. For every £100 a British citizen donates to Third World causes before the end of 2000, the Government will contribute £30. When Millennium Gift Aid is launched on March 18, I urge British people to give more to those

who have too little. We propose extending the tax advantages of Millennium Gift Aid. We propose that every charity, national and international, should be able to benefit from this new tax relief.

We propose in future for every £100 a British citizen donates to any charity, the Government will contribute £30.

**WORK**

Most fundamentally the tax reforms of this Budget provide a better deal for the hard working majority — a ladder of opportunity for those who want to work their way up, a chance to keep more of what they earn and, for all, a fundamental guarantee that work will pay.

Our reforms in national insurance will give employers an overall tax cut of £1.5 billion and employees an overall tax cut on work of £2.5 billion — an average of £130 per year per employee. I am abolishing the perverse tax on work, the entry fee every employee has to pay simply to be part of the national in-

surance system. From this tax cut on work worth over £1.4 billion a year, every one of 20 million employees will gain £69 a year.

Over two financial years, I will further align the starting point with that of income tax so that no one will have to pay either national insurance or income tax for the first £57 of their weekly earnings.

From April 2001 therefore the lower limit for employees, self-employed and employers' national insurance will be harmonised at £57 a week, the same as income tax. As with the lower earnings limit which is rising faster than inflation, the upper limit will rise to £575 and to complete our reforms we will also align employers' national insurance and income tax in the treatment of benefits in kind.

I also propose to extend to the self-employed national insurance rights to the full maternity allowance. Again, to implement the recommendations of the Taylor Report, we will align national insurance arrangements for the self-em-

ployed closer to those of employees: reducing the unfair entry fee from £6.35 a week to £2, and setting the Class Four threshold at the same point as the personal income tax allowance. But I will set contributions at a lower rate than envisaged

### ON JOBS

**'Our New Deal for 1999 is better provision but tougher conditions'**

ployed who, for whatever reason, have yet to join.

I say to them, this will be our New Deal for 1999: better provision but tougher conditions. Our responsibility is to offer training and intensive coaching. In return their responsibility is to come into the New Deal, get the skills and prepare to take up a job.

To help lone parents make the transition into jobs, benefits will continue when they first start work. For them and others the working families tax credit will make work pay more than benefits.

Every working family will be guaranteed a minimum income, to be introduced in October not at the previously announced rate of £190 a week but at £200 a week, more than £10,000 a year. No income tax will be paid until earnings reach £235 a week. This is a tax cut available to 1.4 million families helping 3 million children.

I now propose that over time we extend this principle. The old tax system set a personal allowance that failed to ensure that work paid, and also made thousands pay tax even as they were forced to claim

continued on facing page

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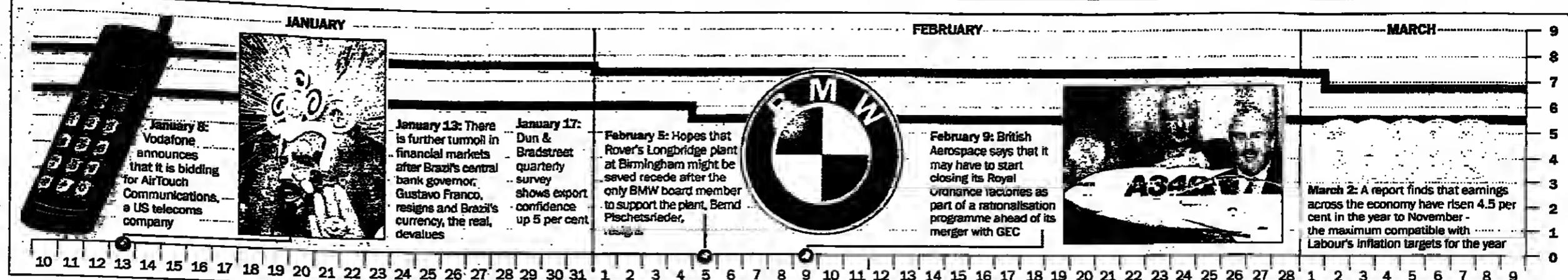
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HALIFAX



## Friends will enjoy bigger slice of pizza

IT MAKES for the perfect new Labour dinner party. There sit Gavyn and Sue, millionaire economist and Treasury confidante, and Ed and Yvette, the (nearly) newlyweds with their eye on high office. Holding court rausiously in the corner is Charlie Whelan, the nicotine-fuelled "master of spin", while Geoffrey Robinson looks on, flanked by his fragrant, pearl-encrusted wife, Marie Elena.

At the head of the table sits Gordon Brown, pondering how he ever came to count such a group as among his closest friends. His girlfriend, Sarah Macaulay, is thinking, "Who needs enemies?" The air is thick with the smell of money. The talk is of football.

The Chancellor enjoys pizza and football evenings with his friends, and has done his best to accommodate them, judging by a Budget that spares drinkers and does much for families, small businesses and the self-employed.

There was much in the Budget speech about married couples and children — in deference, no doubt, to that most golden of couples, Gavyn Davies and Sue Nye. Mr Davies, 48, the chief international economist at the investment bank Goldman Sachs, will have liked what the Chancellor had to say about helping couples with young families.

His wife, Sue, is Mr Brown's personal assistant. The couple have three young children, one of whom, Ben, made the front pages before last year's Budget when Mr Brown gatecrashed his birthday party. Ben refused to smile, even when enticed with a piece of cake. Still, there is to be no tax on child benefit for higher-rate taxpayers.

As it is, Mr Brown has

spared Mr Davies a potential £5 million tax bill through changes to capital gains tax introduced last year. As a partner in Goldman Sachs, Mr Davies stands to gain about £30 million in shares when the bank is floated. If he waits ten years before selling, the tax payable falls from 40 per cent to 24 per cent. This will trim the bill from £12 million to £7.2 million.

Increasing stamp duty on properties worth more than £250,000 could be an issue for Mr Davies. Success has brought two substantial homes, one in Blairith Islington and the other — Baggy House — on a cliff-top in north Devon with its own Hollywood-style pink-and-blue swimming pool. But all this talk about encouraging investment in your own shares will have struck a chord.

References to helping the elderly get more out of their savings may well have been inspired by Geoffrey Robinson, the former Paymaster General. Tony Blair has twice enjoyed family holidays at Mr Robinson's £3 million villa in Tuscania, which has its own church and cottages. There is also a house in Surrey with its own concert hall, and the 20-bedroomed Marsh Court in Hampshire, where Marie Elena passes the week with

her two great dames. Mr Robinson, 60, spends the week in an apartment at the Grosvenor House hotel, the venue for those fun-filled pizza nights. There is also a £1.2 million flat in Cannes. Like Mr Davies, Mr Robinson stands to benefit from the more lenient capital gains tax regime on any future sale of his onshore assets.

He is the beneficiary of a £13 million Guernsey-based offshore trust set up for him by Josta Bourgeois, a glamorous Belgian widow. Embarrassingly, the connection was flushed out just as the Government threatened action on tax-dodging millionaires.

Home improvements and clothing allowances are of undoubted interest to Marie Elena. She has spent a fortune redesigning Marsh Court (the music room is resplendent in turquoise, gold and pink) and is given to turning up at weddings in figure-hugging gold lame. Raising the inheritance tax threshold will have gone down well with their two grown-up children, Margaret Veronique and Alexander.

Scraping the married couples' allowance may not go down quite so well with Ed Balls, the Chancellor's special economic adviser, and his wife, Yvette Cooper, the MP for Pontefract and Castleford.

The couple celebrated their first wedding anniversary in January and are classic dinkies (double income, no kids), but now have every incentive to get on with having children. A former leader writer at the *Financial Times*, Mr Balls, 32, helped to craft Labour innovations such as the windfall tax and an independent Bank of England. He supports Norwich City and is fond of English choral music. Ms Cooper, 29, lists painting portraits (bad-

ly, in her own words) and watching soap operas among her interests. Promised investment in public infrastructure is an issue here: the Ballses are due to travel up to Pontefract by train on Fridays.

Mr Balls is a smoker, but his vices pale next to Labour's leading reprobate, the chain-smoking, hard-drinking Charlie Whelan. Freezing duties on beer, spirits and wine will go down well at the Red Lion.

Mr Whelan is well up on mortgages, having been blamed for leaking details of Peter Mandelson's £373,000 home loan, and will have nodded agreeably at the proposals on Mtris and stamp duty. He

resigned as a special adviser to Mr Brown in January. Now self-employed — making him a winner yet again in the Budget — he presents television and radio programmes and has been contemplating writing a book about the Treasury.

Measures aimed at helping small businesses will have

gone down a treat with the Chancellor's girlfriend, Sarah Macaulay, 35. Her public relations company, Hobbsaw Macaulay Communications, has just 20 employees, making it a prime candidate for Labour largesse. Small businesses are being encouraged to invest in research and development, helped by a new 10p starting tax rate and an ability to write off investments.

Ms Macaulay could hardly have failed to notice all the references to children. Despite perennial rumours of impending marriage, the couple are not engaged and appear in no hurry to tie the knot, but one

begins to wonder. Children, Mr Brown declared, are Britain's future. Families need help at a time when children are growing up. The family tax credit will help families with young children.

No guessing the topic of conversation at the next Brown dinner party.



Pizza, anyone? Mr Brown welcomes, from left, the Robinsons, Sarah Macaulay, Charlie Whelan, Ed Balls and Yvette Cooper and, front, Sue Nye and Gavyn Davies

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have failed to notice all the references to children. Despite perennial rumours of impending marriage, the couple are not engaged and appear in no hurry to tie the knot, but one

## More for NHS and schools

continued from facing page benefits. Not just families but all who work will be guaranteed a minimum income, and this minimum income will be paid through targeted tax cuts and credits.

We start in this Budget with a minimum income guarantee. A new deal, for over 50s returning to work. Nearly 30 per cent of men over 50 are outside the Labour force.

For those unemployed for six months or more, we will create a new employment credit which will guarantee a minimum income of £9,000 a year, for their first year back in full-time work, at least £170 a week.

### TAXATION

We said in our manifesto that we would introduce a 10p starting rate of income tax for individuals when it was prudent to do so.

However, I have to tell the House that this 10p rate will not start in April 2000, like other income tax changes we are making today. It is prudent, instead, for people to get the benefit of the 10p starting rate now.

So it will take effect in April 1999, a 10p starting rate on the first £1,500 of income, the lowest starting rate of tax since 1962, and it will be delivered a few weeks from today. People will see it in their pay packets in May.

Nearly two million people will see their income tax bills cut in half, and take home 90p of every pound they earn.

The new income tax structure will this year be 10p, 23p, and 40p. And income tax allowances, income limits and tax thresholds will rise as usual in line with inflation. The tax rates on savings will remain unchanged.

So this is a Budget with a 10p starting rate of income tax. A 10p starting rate of small business tax, a 10p long term rate for capital gains tax. The maximum small business tax is now down to 20p and corpo-

rate tax for big companies down to 30p. The tax burden on the typical family with children will fall below 20 per cent for the first time in 20 years.

### PUBLIC SERVICES

After long years of neglect, step by step this Government is rebuilding Britain's public services. On top of the £40 billion extra we are already investing in education and health, we will today allocate increased resources for our key public services. We have identified specific areas where step changes can be made through additional investment from the Capital Modernisation Fund.

We are allocating an additional £170 million for crime prevention in areas where crime is highest. The Home Secretary will make a detailed statement to the House.

### ON TAX

• Nearly two million will see income tax bills cut in half?

later this week the Secretary of State for Health will announce detailed proposals not only to extend it to all of the country by the end of next year, but to carry NHS Direct right into communities — with a network of health centres and drop-in centres where people can get immediate advice about treatment.

We have already provided additional resources for upgrading one third of all acci-

dent and emergency units that need modernisation. Today we go further. We today make an additional and immediate cash allocation, to be spent in the next twelve months, for the upgrading of every single accident and emergency unit which needs it, in every part of Britain.

And for every school we will not only invest in new technology, as a result of our prudence in the last year, and following the huge take-up of the additional money provided last year, we are able this month to make another extra and larger allocation for school books: £2,000 to every school in every constituency in every part of the country, immediate new resources of £60 million for a total of ten million new books in all.

### THE NHS

Twenty-one billion pounds extra money is making possible the largest hospital building programme since the war. £1 billion investment in modern technology in the health service, the recruitment of 7,000 new doctors, 15,000 more nurses, and a fair pay award for nurses. The Government's new programme, NHS Direct, is a proven success. And

I have a final announcement. We promised to get inflation and interest rates under control to sort out the public finances, to make this the government of economic competence and we have.

We promised to invest billions more in health and education and we have.

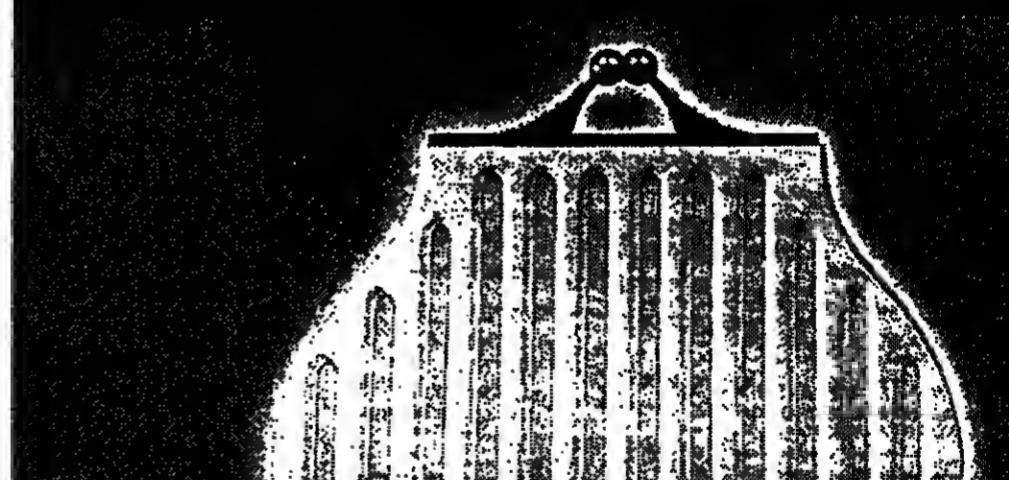
We promised we would cut youth unemployment and we have.

And I can confirm to the House that while rebuilding our public services, our prudence in office also enables us to hold to our pledge made at the election not to raise the basic rate of income tax.

The new income tax structure will this year be 10p, 23p, and 40p. And income tax allowances, income limits and tax thresholds will rise as usual in line with inflation. The tax rates on savings will remain unchanged.

So this is a Budget with a 10p starting rate of income tax. A 10p starting rate of small business tax, a 10p long term rate for capital gains tax. The maximum small business tax is now down to 20p and corpo-

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MARRIED COUPLE, BOTH WORKING, ONE CHILD											
1998/99		1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Gross annual income	12000	8000	12000	8000	15000	10000	15000	10000	20000	15000	30000
Tax/Ni/Benefit	2127	256	2195	551	3117	916	3185	1196	4767	2566	4835
NET INCOME	9873	7744	9805	7449	11893	9084	11815	8804	15233	12434	22411
JOINT NET INCOME	17617	17254	20967	(4.48%)	20619	(2.70%)	27667	27319	31565	22411	22343
%/E tax (reduction)/increase	(7.09%)	(239)	(4.48%)	(224)			(2.70%)	(224)	(2.01%)	(224)	34497
Gross annual income	40000	20000	40000	20000	60000	40000	60000	40000	80000	60000	100000
Tax/Ni/Benefit	11192	4216	11437	4496	10841	19437	11098	27192	18641	27437	19098
NET INCOME	28808	15784	28663	15504	40808	29359	40563	28902	52808	41359	52563
JOINT NET INCOME	44592	44067	44587	(1.86%)	70167	(1.23%)	94167	93465	12154	12434	22343
%/E tax (reduction)/increase	(2.42%)	(401)	(1.86%)	(578)			(1.23%)	(578)	(0.92%)	(578)	117465



MARRIED COUPLE, BOTH WORKING, TWO CHILDREN											
1998/99		1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Gross annual income	12000	8000	12000	8000	15000	10000	15000	10000	20000	15000	30000
Tax/Ni/Benefit	2127	244	2195	31	3117	416	3185	576	4767	2066	4835
NET INCOME	9873	6244	9805	7989	11893	9584	11815	9324	15233	12934	22343
JOINT NET INCOME	17617	17774	20967	(4.48%)	21139	(2.70%)	28167	27839	(2.01%)	(224)	12874
%/E tax (reduction)/increase	(7.09%)	(239)	(4.48%)	(224)			(2.70%)	(224)	(0.92%)	(578)	117465
Gross annual income	40000	20000	40000	20000	60000	40000	60000	40000	80000	60000	100000
Tax/Ni/Benefit	11192	3716	11437	3976	19192	10141	19437	10578	27192	18141	27437
NET INCOME	28808	16284	28563	16024	40808	29859	40563	29422	52808	41859	52563
JOINT NET INCOME	45092	44587	45092	(1.86%)	70667	(1.23%)	94867	93985	12154	12434	22343
%/E tax (reduction)/increase	(2.42%)	(401)	(1.86%)	(578)			(1.23%)	(578)	(0.92%)	(578)	117465



MARRIED, NON-WORKING SPOUSE, TWO CHILDREN											
1998/99		1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Gross annual income	10000	10000	20000	20000	25000	25000	30000	30000	35000	35000	35000
Tax/Ni/Benefit	117	271	3417	3571	5067	5221	6239	6393	7842	8173	
NET INCOME	9883	9729	16583	19393	19779	23761	23607	27158	28827		
%/E tax (reduction)/increase	(3.53%)	(150)	(1.06%)	(150)	(0.79%)	(150)	(0.66%)	(150)	(2.44%)	(227)	
Gross annual income	45000	45000	60000	60000	100000	100000	140000	140000	180000	180000	180000
Tax/Ni/Benefit	11842	12173	17842	18173	33842	34173	49842	50173	65842	66173	
NET INCOME	33158	32827	42158	41827	61558	65827	90158	89827	114158	113827	
%/E tax (reduction)/increase	(1.70%)	(150)	(1.18%)	(150)	(0.44%)	(150)	(0.34%)	(150)	(2.22%)	(227)	



MARRIED COUPLE 65-74											
1998/99		1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000		1999/2000	
Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Income (pensions)	8112	0	2012	7988	12112	2012	12988	2012	18112	2012	17528
Tax/Ni/Benefit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NET INCOME	8112	0	2012	7988	12112	2012	12988	2012	18112	2012	17528
JOINT NET INCOME	10124	0	20000	10000	11889	12120	13622	13731	14199	14398	14789
%/E tax (reduction)/increase	(0.00%)	£(160)	(0.00%)	£(138)	(3.73%)	£(143)	(13.39%)	£(143)	(3.05%)	£(119)	
Gross annual income	13112	2012	12988	2012	22988	2012	21112	2012	27988	2012	45122
Tax/Ni/Benefit	6000	4000	6000	4000	6000	4000	6000	4000	6000	4000	6000
NET INCOME	16541	6009	16219	5930	20076	6009	19850	5930</td			

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INCOME TAX

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999



Fabius, left, and Dufoix, cleared in the HIV blood trial, and Hervé, guilty of manslaughter

## Fury as court frees blood scandal trio

**Adam Sage**  
reports on a case  
that plunged  
French justice  
into turmoil

ings — the late President Mitterrand — who set up the court in 1993 when he realised that more than 4,000 haemophiliacs and hospital patients infected in France — far more than in any other European country — of whom about 1,000 have since died.

The ruling plunged French justice into turmoil, but represented a posthumous triumph for the architect of the procedure



Medical staff help Sylvie Rouy, infected with HIV by a transfusion while giving birth, as she leaves court

in the 1980s. Shouts of "murderer" rang out in the court. Sylvie Rouy, 36, who was contaminated in 1985 from a blood transfusion after the birth of her son, said: "In this country, politicians are like gangsters. You can catch them but you can't punish them. This is a scandal."

In a verdict that was as bizarre as the three-week trial, the court said M Hervé had already suffered at the hands of French public opinion. There was no reason to punish him further, said Christian Le Guehenec, the presiding judge.

His comments confirmed the view of victims and their relatives that the court was rigged in favour of the defendants as 12 of the jurors were MPs and only three were professional magistrates.

The prosecution had itself called

for an acquittal.

Critics said Mitterrand had done all to ensure the acquittal of his protégé, M Fabius, whom he appointed as France's youngest Prime Minister in 1984. Mitterrand's success was complete when the court astonished observers by going out of its way to praise M Fabius for his handling of the AIDS epidemic. As there is little chance of fresh charges being brought against any of the defendants, M Fabius is now free to pursue his ambition to become head of state.

The 52-year-old former

Prime Minister was accused, along with M Hervé, 56, and Mme Dufoix, 55, of criminal negligence in delaying the introduction of AIDS screening tests for commercial reasons. The two Health Ministers were also accused of failing to halt blood donations among high-risk groups, including prisoners, and of failing to ensure the sterilisation of blood products known to be contaminated with HIV.

But the court exonerated all three defendants of blame for any failings of the public health system in connection with these aspects of the case.

M Le Guehenec said M Fabius had acted to speed up the introduction of HIV-screening tests. Eight of the jurors voted to condemn M Hervé for two issues that did not feature in the main charges. They said he had been negligent in failing to ensure the systematic testing of blood products from the day the programme was meant to start, August 1, 1985. He had also failed to ensure victims were told they had been contaminated, leaving their families exposed to unnecessary risks. Two people were contaminated as a result. M Hervé has five days to decide whether to appeal. He said after the verdict: "The court has not had the courage to acquit me and it has not had the courage to convict me properly. The verdict is unjust."

He is likely to continue in his post as Mayor of Rennes in Brittany. M Fabius will retain his job as president of the National Assembly. Mme Dufoix has retired from politics and become a fervent Protestant and owner of a small vineyard in southern France.

But the 15-year saga is not over. Several health officials and advisers to the ministers may now be charged.

THE saddest of smiles lined Joelle Bouchet's face. "This hearing," she said in her soft, calm voice, "it's been awful. All lies and manipulation."

A few weeks ago she had high hopes she would find answers to her grief during the trial. This was to be the moment when she finally discovered how, in 1985, she came to inject HIV-infected blood in her son and only child. She thought she would find out why nobody had bothered to test or sterilise the blood product that contaminated Ludovic, then a nine-year-old haemophiliac. She believed the process would relieve her of the immense guilt that it was she who had injected her son, now 23, whose survival depends on 6,500 pills a year.

"We have suffered so much that I wanted to face this trial with sincerity and openness," she said. "But French justice just wants to smother the truth. The judges do not even know what is in the dossier."

She is not alone in criticising the Court of Justice of the Republic, set up to rule on the ministers accused of wrongdoing in office. The gaffes of the presiding judge, Christian Le Guehenec, have drawn gasps of astonishment from veteran court reporters. Lawyers have denounced the prosecution for undermining its own case, describing it as "built on sand". Matthieu Aron, a top legal commentator, said: "This is a trial like no other."

"I have just seen emptiness and indifference inside the court," Mme Bouchet said. "But I am used to it. It's been going on for so many years."

The indifference started in 1983 when Edmond Hervé, then Health Minister, told blood-banks to stop collecting blood from prisoners. "But they carried on," said Mme Bouchet. "And I just carried on using the products."

"Every fortnight or so, Ludovic would cut himself and I would inject the Factor 8 product he needed for his blood to coagulate." At the time, the Factor 8 product was made from blood pooled from a large number of donors. Inevitably, one or probably all of the bottles she had in her

fridge contained blood taken from an HIV-infected, drug-taking inmate.

In October 1985, after one of Ludovic's regular blood tests, Mme Bouchet was told that he was "HIV positive". "I telephoned my doctor. He said it was like hepatitis and that there was nothing to worry about, so I didn't." Two years later, Ludovic fell ill. The doctor told her the truth: her son had AIDS. "I felt responsible," she said. "Why had I not found out earlier? Why had I injected that product?"

If M Hervé and Georgina Dufoix, Social Affairs and Health Minister, had ordered the sterilisation of blood products early in 1985 — as Mme Bouchet believes they should have done — Ludovic would not be suffering from AIDS. Instead, they waited until the au-

It's been awful  
... all lies and  
manipulation  
of the truth by  
our officials

tum. Ludovic could also have been saved if Laurent Fabius, then Prime Minister, had authorised a US-made blood-screening test which was ready in the spring of 1985. But the Prime Minister delayed a decision until the summer, finally giving his approval to a French-made test.

The ministers claim they acted quickly, but Mme Bouchet argues: "They wanted the French firm to clean up the market, which was worth Fr400 million (£40 million) a year. What are we, compared with Fr400 million a year?"

Over the past decade, Mme Bouchet's son has been forced to abandon his studies "as they didn't want AIDS victims in schools at the time". She has seen him plunge towards death, but has "stabilised" now. Her marriage has ended "under the strain", but this articulate woman refuses to give up her fight for justice.



Joelle Bouchet had hoped that the trial would reveal why her haemophiliac son, Ludovic, was treated with HIV-contaminated blood products in 1985

## Bonn tackled on Hitler slaves' cash

FROM ROGER BOYD IN BONN

THE reputation of Germany's top companies yesterday hung in the balance as a group of New York lawyers negotiated with the Bonn Government over how to compensate wartime slave labourers who survived the Holocaust.

An issue is an industrial fund, designed by Bodo Hornbach, closest adviser of Gerhard Schröder, the Chancellor, that is supposed to channel money from companies

like Volkswagen, BMW and Siemens to people forced to work in brutal conditions during the Third Reich. The point is not only to make amends morally, but to head off class action suits in America. These cases are proving to be a public relations disaster for Germany and could be costly.

Herr Hornbach, who met the lawyers in the Bonn chancellery yesterday, is anxious that these cases be dropped. No German company will be ready to pay into a fund if it feels it has to pay out a second

time in the courts. The lawyers in Bonn yesterday — Michael Hausfeld, Mel Weiss and Martin Mendelson — were not convinced, however, that the fund will work or that it will give enough to individuals. One of their demands of Herr Hornbach was: how much will each individual receive? At the moment the scope of the fund is rather modest: \$2 billion (£1.2 billion). Since some half a million out of 10 million slave labourers are still alive, the per capita compensation will be limited.

## Nato will offer 'Marshall Plan' to help Balkans

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR

AS AN inducement to signing a peace settlement, the warring parties in Kosovo were yesterday offered a new partnership with Nato to help them become more democratic and more in tune with modern European ideals.

With pressure building on the Royal United Services Institute in Whitehall during a conference to mark next month's 50th anniversary of Nato, Señor Solana emphasised that the alliance

es democratically. The idea that Nato troops could instruct the Yugoslav Army in Western military procedures might seem optimistic, but Señor Solana was clearly intending his remarks for an era when President Milosevic no longer holds sway as an authoritarian leader.

Speaking at the Royal United Services Institute in Whitehall during a conference to mark next month's 50th anniversary of Nato, Señor Solana emphasised that the alliance

FIGHTING erupted again in southern Kosovo yesterday as the Yugoslav Army laid siege to several villages, ethnic Albanian sources said. OSCE observers also reported artillery fire in the north near Vučitrn, as the UN refugee agency in Geneva said more than 1,600 villagers had fled fighting in the area. (AFP)

was ready to launch airstrikes on Serbia, if Belgrade refused to sign a peace deal. However, appealing over the head of the Yugoslav President, Señor Solana said his proposal for a "partnership for prosperity" in the Balkans was intended to encourage young people in the region to "build for the future rather than refighting the battles of the past".

Serb police last night issued arrest warrants for eight members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, including three negotiators at the French talks.

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London	Hawthorn Hotel*	£86.00	Birmingham/Hopwood	Westmound Hotel*	£74.00	Sheffield	Beaufort Hotel	£74.00
London	Royal Hop Hotel	£82.00	Birmingham/Softail	The Regency*	£76.00	Widnes	Gravenor House	£60.00
London	Tewkesbury Park	£78.00	Canwick	The Roman Way*	£82.00	Windermere	The Hilcrest Hotel	£66.00
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Tring	Rose & Crown*	£80.00	Leicester	Time Out Hotel*	£74.00	Ludlow	Brownsover Hall*	£80.00
Welwyn Garden City	Homestead Court*	£64.00	Stafford	Brownsover Hall*	£80.00	Shrewsbury	The Feathers Hotel*	£94.00
EAST OF ENGLAND	Bognor Regis	£66.00	Stone	Stone House Hotel*	£54.00	Worcester	The Lion Hotel*	£70.00
Bournemouth	Royal Osborne*	£66.00	Stratford-upon-Avon	The White Swan*	£86.00	Worcester	The Star Hotel*	£78.00



Many male members of the most senior Lemba clan carry the highly distinctive genetic signature of the Jewish priesthood — rarely found outside this Jewish elite

## Is this a lost tribe of Israel?

I didn't take long for Dr Tudor Parfitt to notice the black men loitering shyly at the back of the lecture hall. They stood out from their white university colleagues not only because of their colour — this was Johannesburg in the mid-Eighties — but also because they wore what appeared to be Jewish skull caps.

They had come to hear Parfitt, senior academic at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, speak about the Falashas, known as the black Jews of Ethiopia. Parfitt, an Oxford-educated linguist and historian whose fame had spread with his study of the Falashas, learnt that the men at his lecture believed that they, too, belonged to a lost tribe of Israel. The men, from a tribe called the Lemba, invited Parfitt to

Genetic detective work among a black African tribe has proved that it has biological links to the Jews. Anjana Ahuja reports

visit their villages, hear their stories and learn their history.

Now, after more than a decade of study and an odyssey across Africa, Parfitt is ready to believe their claims. Using techniques in genetic anthropology perfected by colleagues at University College London, Parfitt recently discovered that this 70,000-strong black African tribe, scattered across southern Africa, shows a startling genetic overlap with inhabitants of southern Arabia, which harboured a thriving Jewish population in ancient times.

Many male members of the most senior Lemba clan carry the highly distinctive genetic signature of the Jewish priesthood. This biological la-

bel, dating from biblical times and rarely found outside this Jewish elite, is certain to spark a controversial debate about Jewish and African history.

Parfitt, who retraced his steps across Africa for a documentary, is astonished at how his quest has turned out. "When I visited their villages, there seemed to be a mass of things that seemed to be authentically rather than learnt Semitic behaviour," he says. "They didn't seem to have picked up their customs from colonialists or missionaries."

The echoes of Judaism were abundant. The Lemba refused to eat "the pig" and ate only kosher meat. There were festivals and rituals to mark every-

thing, from the new moon to menstruation. Boys were circumcised; inter-marriage was forbidden. The names of their 12 tribes seemed to derive from Hebrew. One is called the Semele, which could be a corrupted form of Solomon. Another, the tribe of medicine men, is known as the Sadiki, close to the Hebrew term tsadik, which means righteous man. Parfitt was intrigued, but wary. He decided that the way to clarify the issue was to use genetics. Armed with mouth swabs, test tubes and boxes of lollipops to soften villagers, Parfitt got permission from tribal elders to take saliva samples. The Lemba were keen to co-operate with those

who might aid their claims to be children of Abraham.

The samples were sent for analysis to Dr Neil Bradman and Dr Mark Thomas at the Centre for Genetic Anthropology at University College London. The results were encouraging. Parfitt says: "We were looking at the Y chromosome, which is passed from father to son. We found that the Lemba gene pool had both Semitic and Bantu (black African) contributions. South African geneticists, who had also been investigating, had proved this, too. By Semitic, we mean characteristic of people in the Middle East and obviously this Semitic group includes Jews."

Bradman and Thomas had another surprise for Parfitt. Samples taken from the most senior clan, the Buba, showed the Cohen Modal Haplotype, a distinctive genetic pattern on the Y chromosome. This biological signature is found predominantly among members of the Jewish priesthood, the Cohanim. One could only become a Jewish priest if one's father was a priest — this pattern of paternal inheritance has preserved the Cohen Modal Haplotype as a potential watermark for Judaism. "This was arguable proof that there was a Jewish element in the history of the Lemba," Parfitt sums up.

Are the Lemba a lost tribe of Israel? "If you mean that they are one of the 12 tribes taken into captivity, then I don't think you can say that. But that phrase has taken on a more soft-focus meaning. If a lost tribe of Israel is a group that has been lost and has some unsuspected connection to other Jews, then it is a legitimate claim."

Because of the numbers of Lemba showing Semitic characteristics, the Jewish connection stretches back at least a century. "It is extremely unlikely that there could have been sexual contact between the Lemba and an unknown Jew," Parfitt says. "Moreover, it is practically inconceivable that it could have happened without being recorded. The influence is more likely to have

come from southern Arabia where there were Jews. It's possible that a band of Jews left to go to black Africa many centuries ago and then interbred."

This is supported by genetic studies of people in the mountainous Hadramawt region of Yemen. Parfitt conducted studies here because many aspects of Lemba heritage seemed to fit with the area. Various mountain regions bear names that are similar to clan names; one of the towns is called Sena, which could be the mythical town of Senna from which the Lemba are said to have originated.

"That area in Yemen is not rich enough to support a big population, and it had a tradition of sending its sons to the four corners of the earth," Parfitt says. That would be consistent with a small-scale exodus to Africa and with tales passed through Lemba families of a homeland in the Middle East.

Parfitt, who is now preparing his research for publication, admits that these newfound members of the Jewish faith will provoke controversy. He is keen to point out that his interest is anthropological, rather than political, but he can see the implications.

"I don't think the Israelis will be pleased because it could mean another African group clamouring for citizenship," says Parfitt, who has been made an honorary Lemba. "Scholars in Zimbabwe won't be pleased because they think their work has been denigrated by the Lemba. To prove that the Lemba did have origins outside Africa will leave egg on a lot of faces."

"There is no great movement among the Lemba to return to Israel. They are not persecuted for their religion. But what would happen if they did want to go? What would it mean for groups who claim to be of Jewish descent? Would we get people waving their DNA at the Israelis, asking to be let in? It is bound to provoke thought about what makes someone Jewish."

● Search for the Sons of Abraham, Channel 4, 8pm, Monday, March 15. Journey to the Vanished City, Tudor Parfitt, Phoenix, £7.99

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## Removing the whiff in the Paris Métro

TRAVELLERS visiting some of the newer stations on the Paris Métro may detect an unusual smell in the air. Is it a ripe Camembert — or a newly baked baguette? Alas, no. It is the bad egg smell of hydrogen sulphide, which emerges from the sulphur-containing soils of Paris and leaks into the stations. The human nose is

exquisitely sensitive to hydrogen sulphide. A few parts per billion are enough to wrinkle noses, fortunately, since it is a toxic gas.

Researchers at the Ecole Centrale in Lyons, working with the Ahlstrom Paper Group, have turned to an ingenious bit of chemistry to try to clear the air. Dr Pierre Pichat and colleagues plan to try a novel water purification system which uses cheap and simple components — titanium dioxide, glass fibre and ultraviolet lamps. *Chemistry in Britain*, which reports the plan, says it may mean sweeter Métro air.

Titanium dioxide is the pigment in white paints so it is made in vast quantities. When divided in the form of an ultra-fine powder and exposed to ultraviolet light, it behaves like a semiconductor.

Electrons in the titanium dioxide molecules are promoted to a higher energy band. They leave behind vacancies where electrons ought to be, and since

### Just how smart is a snake?

SNAKES are not good "at mazes which has given them a reputation as rather dumb creatures. Traditionally, the ability of animals such as rats to learn new tasks is measured by putting them in mazes and seeing how quickly they learn to escape.

Professor David Holtzmann, of the University of Rochester in New York, has devised a new test without a maze. He and his colleagues put 4ft corn snakes into a black, bathtub-like contraption that had eight holes and various markings from which the snakes could learn to navigate. When first tested, a snake typically takes more than ten minutes to find a hole. But after four days of practice, it is down to about six minutes: some snakes can do it in just 30 seconds.

The research team reports in the journal *Animal Behaviour* that pieces of aluminium foil were attached to snakes' heads to help in tracking them: they were filmed with a video camera.

"It isn't natural for a snake to be in a maze," Professor Holtzmann says. "But they are good at escaping from and diving into holes." He plans to use the test to measure how the brains of snakes develop.

## MOTHER'S DAY

SUNDAY MARCH 14<sup>th</sup>

OK, things are getting serious now. M-Day is almost here and you still haven't cracked it. Luckily, you still have Drinks Direct. Call us now (and we mean now) and we'll send Mum a Cuvee Napa with Bendicks Luxury Chocolates gift-wrapped with your personal message for only £22.49 and all will be cool. You have until end of play tomorrow. Otherwise, Mother's Day will be a no-show.



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# A Budget for the ballot box

Prudence has served Gordon well for the battle to come

**T**HE only announcement missing from Gordon Brown's speech was the date of the next general election. Yesterday's unexpectedly wide-ranging and, at first sight, generous package sounded like a pre-election Budget. Of course, the details reveal many questions and uncertainties. And several measures are being phased in over the next two years, the run-up to the election. That political target was clearly as much in Mr Brown's mind as any financial ones.

The Budget offered a combination of fiscal and monetary caution (prudence in Mr Brown's lexicon), together with redistribution. Money has been transferred from better-off couples without children to the working poor, average earners with children, and pensioners.

This package was coupled with eye-catching increases in public investment, in practice allocating money first announced last July. It all seemed too good to be true. Most of the pain was glossed over: for instance, the disappearance of the 20p rate of income tax came in the slipstream of the announcements of the new 10p starting rate and cut in the basic rate next year.

At the same time, Mr Brown was keen to reassure financial markets that he was not taking risks. Despite his apparent largesse, public borrowing over the next three years is projected to be lower than previously forecast. Consequently, the "golden rule" on the balance between current spending and revenue and overall public debt targets should be met. So where is the money coming from? For what Mr Brown described as a "boost to purchasing power over the next three years by £6 billion"?

Mr Brown's answer is twofold — the rewards of fiscal restraint since the election and lower forecasts of social security spending. Fiscal policy has been tightened substantially and a sharp fall in long-term interest rates should produce £4 billion on savings on debt interest payments over the next three years.

More significant is a cut of £9 billion in projections by the Department of Social Security of spending on unemployment and income support. This reflects new estimates of the state of the labour market and the impact of welfare reforms (including the tightening up of entitlements, inaugurated by Peter Lilley). This reduction comes despite a revision upwards of unemployment forecasts because of the slowdown in economic activity. Overall, spending is expected to be £18 billion less than previously assumed over the next three years. So even though forecasts of tax receipts have been cut by £8 billion over the period, this leaves £10 billion, of which £4 billion has gone to reduce the deficit. And, hey presto, Mr Brown has brought numerous rabbits out of the hat.

The Tories were busily pointing out last night that several taxes are being increased. Despite a fall in the coming year, the overall tax burden is

*peter.riddell@the-times.co.uk*

"God knows why they asked, I am not an actor, I had never done a voiceover,

but the Saatchis wanted a man to whom cats would listen"

**I**s it any wonder that, when it comes to T. S. Eliot, pond-owners are ambivalent? On the one hand, he spoke for all of them in imperishably declaring April to be the cruellest month: while pond-owners do not care one way or the other about breeding lilacs out of a dead land, they worry themselves sick. Every April, about breeding frogs out of a dead pond, because April is when frogs descend upon our ponds to breed, and when, as the direct result, the cruellest things happen to them.

Which brings us, unfortunately, to T. S. Eliot's other hand: for he loved not frogs, but cats, the more practical the better, and, thanks to an irony which must have the old Modernist spinning gleefully in his grave, it is practical cats which are the very heart of the April cruelty.

Here's how it works. Of all the many things they like killing,

cats like killing frogs best. Frogs are not only less elusive than mice and sparrows, they taste better. We know this because if they didn't, Frenchmen would be called Mice or Sparrows.

However, for 11 months of the year, frogs are elusive enough to escape the feline diet, since as soon as a paw appears at the edge of their pond, the frogs leap from reed or lily-pad and scuttle rapidly out of harm's way. But they cannot do this in April, because in April frogs have big heavy things on their backs. They have other frogs there. Which, for cats, practical enough to have sussed this out, means in *flagrante delicious*; and, for me, means April days spent heartbreakingly shovelling up the inedible piles of lovers for whom, just as the earth moved, so did the cat.

For 30 Springs, I have sought to stop this happening, but there was no way of deterring the cats

from the pond. Until this year. This April, I shall know what to do, and I shall know it thanks to none other than the brothers Saatchi, who gave me what I know by knowing more about me than I knew myself. Five weeks ago, their agency phoned me out of the blue and invited me to audition for a TV commercial. God knows why, I am not an actor, I had never done a voiceover before, but I thought why not, so a car came to Cricklewood and took me to Soho, where I was told that Maurice and Charles were breaking the advertising mould with the first-ever Whiskas commercial designed to appeal not to owners, but to cats.

Months of research had gone into finding the sort of screen

images which attracted feline attention, and all the resultant film now lacked was a soundtrack designed to do the same. The Saatchis, in short, wanted a man to whom cats would listen. They had auditioned many, to no effect; right after night, the brothers had wept into their pillows, and gnawed their teddies furiously. Until, oh joy, the night of January 20. That night, they slept like tops. They had found their man. They had gone to Cricklewood and come back with Doctor Dolittle.

A week later, the commercials started going out. Friends rang up and said was that you talking to cats just now, and I said yes, put your cat on, ha-ha, all that, but the one uncertainty among all this jollity was, of

course, about whether the cats would respond. Would they mark what they had seen and I had said, and begin dragging their owners down to Tesco to stop themselves against the pyramids of Whiskas in purring supplication?

**W**ELL, a month has passed, the world has held its breath, and at last, this week, the results are in. M & C Saatchi just rang me. They were beside themselves. They could hardly speak. Research had shown that 8 out of 10 cats had preferred the Whiskas advert. The agency had miles of footage from hundreds of cameras focused on thousands of cats who had lain yawning on rug and sofa, absently licking this and that while countless other adverts jostled on their fireside screens, but had suddenly sprung up, ears pricked, eyes

J.P. JONES



ALL SMOKES & MIRAS ...

## A debate too late

The real economic fight takes place between Premier and Chancellor

pressed for lower taxes and higher relief. They would want to keep mortgage interest subsidies, leave pensions premiums alone and be kind to company cars. Mr Blair's Budget would protect child benefit, go carefully on Workfare and fight to save duty-free. It would seek "pockets of cash" for a stream of high-profile initiatives: loans-for-enterprise, books-for-schools, computers-for-teachers, subsidies to Rover and cash for movie moguls. Mr Blair would like to decentralise and reduce bureaucracy. He would like

A Budget is a rare event in the political calendar. It is something real, it is the moment when the true opposition to the government of the day, the Treasury, attempts to shout the facts of life. Back in the days of Denis Healey, this included the messy bits. For once those pushy, camera-hungry, get-votes-quick ministers are shoved into the gutter and realpolitik is cock of the walk. Tony Blair and his image-spinners must retreat into the shadows. Budget Day is when Whitehall's undead awake. It is the Festival of the Greys. Yesterday they were positively radiant.

The British constitution pretends that government is a seamless web. It pretends that the great divide in politics is variously between Cabinet and Opposition, Labour and Tory, Whitehall and Parliament. The true divide is quite different. It is between politics and economics, between the day-to-day craving for glamour of a presidential Downing Street, and the long-term realism of the Treasury. On the one hand, Downing Street is led by the Prime Minister, his eye fixed on the next election, with a ravenous following of spendthrift Cabinet ministers, MPs of all parties, lobbyists, the media, pollsters and focus groups. All cry for more. On the other is the Treasury, led by the Chancellor. It is nothing but the Treasury, a cadre of officials hardened by adversity and solitude, a freemasonry of steel. Downing Street is the ego of politics, the perpetual triumph of hope over experience. The Treasury is the converse. It is the id.

Rivalry between these estates of the realm is not essentially personal. Prime Minister and Chancellor usually start out as close political friends. They rarely stay that way. Margaret Thatcher and John Major began as close allies of all their Chancellors, and ended as enemies. The division is institutional and unavoidable.

These two camps would have gone into yesterday's Budget process with diametrically opposed ambitions. The virtual Budget of Mr Blair and his allies would have



Simon Jenkins

would have been the responsibility of subordinate tiers of government. In Britain the Treasury pays for and controls such detailed supplies as school books, hospital waiting lists, science grants, and film-making. Such meticulous centralisation makes impossible any reduction in bureaucracy. The new Treasury control is the dawn of government by inspection, now booming under Mr Brown.

The final Budget is undoubtedly a political success. But why could we not have been shown the others?

Today the House of Commons starts a wholly synthetic Budget debate, led by Labour and Conservative spokesmen. It is meaningless. The real debate, between the proponents of the first two Budgets, is over. All we know of that debate are occasional leaks, as over child

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benefit or carbon taxes, or when a social security minister resigns.

The secret of British government is a cliché, but like the best clichés, it is true. The pre-Budget debate is kept secret not because the outcome is "market-sensitive". Market-sensitive changes, for instance in Peps and tax reliefs, are nowadays signalled in advance, and rightly so. Secrecy is for a different reason. It is to protect the esteem of ministers who might lose arguments. It is to maintain the fiction that modern government is not about debate but about discipline. This fiction shows an arrogance towards the people that only a politician could entertain.

**W**HEN I recently reported that John Prescott's department had lost a titanic fight with the Treasury over an aspect of local finance, Mr Prescott flatly denied it. He said it was simply not true, and told the House of Commons the same. His denial was a complete whopper, yet somehow such whoppers are excused as conforming to constitutional convention. Keeping the people in the dark about the way their money is spent is fine. Keeping them in the dark about their being kept in the dark is equally fine. Arguments within government are like MI6 in the old days: their existence must be deniable. In Opposition, this Government believed in open government. Now, openness can get stuffed.

I would like to see a Green Paper, say each new year, that sets out with reasonable frankness the two Budgets that of the Treasury and that of the Rest. It would indicate spending department bids and the Treasury's preferred response. Like any normal Green Paper, it would discuss the arguments for and against mooted changes in taxes, benefits, reliefs and subsidies. It would enable discussion to take place within a context of public spending constraint. It would mean ministers lobbying in public, as well as private. It would enable Parliament to hold a Budget debate last month, not this week when it is too late.

Such a Green Paper would reveal not a split government but a thinking government, a discussing government. Instead we have one that treats us all as dumb.

comment@the-times.co.uk



## Heroic Hewitt

JAMES HEWITT is to claim he was a life-saving Gulf War hero in an autobiography he is writing in secret, which will detail his affair with Diana, Princess of Wales.

The former acting major will say he refused orders to blow up an unidentified fleet of desert tanks.

"I wasn't a coward, like people say," he tells me. "I argued with my brigadier for 45 minutes and really put my foot down." As luck had it, the 14 tanks turned out to be Allied forces from the 14th/20th King's Hussars.

Although he admits to being "not very interesting", the ginger one feels there is more to his existence than his turn with the Princess.

"I never had an apology from that brigadier," he says. "All he ever said was that I was almost a great soldier. No one else will blow my trumpet, so I now have to."

The Ministry of Defence is unfamiliar with the story: "14 tanks! Well, this is a new version. Um, take it all with a sack of salt."

**OH, to be a Labour MP.** Claire Ward, the 26-year-old "Blair babe", says "I don't always admit to being an MP. If I'm in a bar with people I don't know, to say you are a Labour MP is not always a good move. I have been known to say I am a solicitor."

**POLLY SAMSON.** The delectable wife of Pink Floyd's David Gilmour (below) and ex-muse of the



poet Heathcote Williams, is to burst into print — controversially. Her short stories are billed as "dark" (one is written from the perspective of a baby-snatcher). "Maybe it's a reaction," says the former publishing babe, "to having to be professionally delightful."

**THE "dirty" Streets of London are the new inspiration for the earthy artists, Gilbert and George. For their next exhibition, they will have their photographs set against Swallow Street, Spur Street, Organ Lane, Sparkling Hill Wood and sundry other enclaves whose innocence is forever lost. "Sex," they explain, "is the most important thing in art and represents the power of living."**

**WE GOT IT FROM AN IRA CAR BOOT SALE**

**PICKETS** are not alone in stirring Germaine Greer: her charges at Warwick accuse her in a long attack in the student rag of being an absentee professor.

"Ask an English student what they learned from Greer's teaching at Warwick, they'll probably look blankly; it ventures. "In her two-day week, the elusive Greer takes one seminar and invites selected students for sherry."

"Finalists" and first-years have been lectured by her once. Second-years have apparently not had the pleasure at all... For all the impact she's had on the average Warwick student Greer might as well still be at Cambridge. "The average professor earns £40,000. I tried to ask Ms Greer if she earned her dosh but she was not around to answer."

**HIS defence of our island independence is heroic, but what is Michael Portillo chuntering on about? "Britain stands halfway between the Continent and the United States geographically."**

**STING** now admits that all that hanging on about rainforest was a terrible bore. "Shut up and sing you pillock," was the considered response of the vox populi. "He moans, thumbing his primer. But, worrying news for the Indian sub-continent: the great man tells *High Life* that this is his next patch to save — first stop the Ganges.

**SELF-realisation. High-charging Anthony Julius is to give a lecture — on why lawyers are unpopular.**

JASPER GERARD

ESSENCE

Budget

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999



## ESSENCE OF BROWN

A cunning Budget by a commanding Chancellor

Rarely has a Chancellor succeeded as well as Gordon Brown in synchronising the cycles of politics and the economy. The current slowing in the economy is at the midway point between general elections: with the next time that new Labour faces a national poll. He planned his unpopular tax increases and spending stringency for the early years of the Parliament; the political rewards stretch on ahead.

In many ways yesterday's Budget seemed too good to be true. Personal taxes were cut; help for children and the elderly was increased; corporate taxes were reduced and public services were given more cash; yet the overall fiscal stance remains prudent. How can this be reconciled?

Because spending has been, and will be, even lower than planned. And because, as William Hague pointed out, Mr Brown's "stealth taxes" of his first two years are only now being chipped away by tax cuts.

This underspending is an achievement of which the Chancellor deserves to be proud. Total expenditure will be £18 billion lower than expected over the next three years. Social security accounts for £9 billion of that. Welfare reforms seem to be paying dividends before they are even enacted, by propelling the works off the registers.

The tax cuts meanwhile, are staged for maximum electoral advantage. While the 10p starting rate comes in this year, the 22p basic rate and increased child benefit arrive next year, offset by the abolition of the married couple's allowance and mortgage interest tax relief. The best year, at least for couples with children, will be 2001, when the children's tax credit is introduced. That, uncoincidentally, is the likeliest year for the next general election.

There are many aspects to yesterday's Budget that are not quite what they appeared on television. The headline-grabbing 10p starting rate for small businesses sounds excellent. But it will apply only to the first £10,000 of profit. A small business making a profit of £10,000 or less barely deserves to be incorporated. This will lead

to a rash of unnecessary incorporations by self-employed people — which will be great news only for accountants.

Overall, however, the Budget looks like being highly politically successful. Most working-class and middle-class people will be better off. So will most children and all pensioners. Why has Mr Brown produced a pre-election Budget now? It cannot harm the prospects for Labour candidates in this year's local, Scottish, Welsh and European elections. And the children's tax credit needs plenty of planning. But the timing also reflects Labour's realism about its present and past. Voters must see the results in their pay packet in April 2001. Hearing Labour promises is not enough.

This thinking does not preclude more cuts in the basic rate of income tax; they, unlike other measures, can be implemented almost at once. Mr Brown may well be aiming for the 20p basic rate that was the Tories' dream. Meanwhile, opposition to his fiscal measures is becoming increasingly difficult. Yesterday's tax cuts were in "kitchen table" areas that everyone understands, such as income tax. The earlier tax rises were in dark fields such as advanced corporation tax on dividends.

When companies cannot complain and Tories struggle to oppose, Labour backbenchers ought to be suspicious. Yet Mr Brown has also managed to deliver on many old Labour objectives. The party's main pledge in the 1992 election was to boost pensions and child benefit. This has now been done but not by hugely increasing the taxes of the better-off. Labour has long wanted pensions to track rises in earnings, not prices. This Mr Brown has done, but not for the very expensive universal state pension, only for the minimum income guarantee which tops up the pensions of the poorest. And he has boosted spending on public services, but in an affordable fashion. This Budget represents the essence of new Labour, delivering many of its traditional aims in a sophisticated and popular way which puts its opponents in all sorts of trouble.

## HOWARD'S END

A politician more often right than popular

They also serve who sometimes stand and lose. It is not essential to lead a political party to lead opinion and change the country. Michael Howard's decision to stand down as Shadow Foreign Secretary has, inevitably, provoked memories of his failure to win the Tory leadership, a failure partly brought about by the personal criticisms of his former lieutenant Ann Widdecombe. But while Mr Howard failed in that ambition, he succeeded in a way given to few. As Home Secretary he turned an historical tide and switched the terms of political trade. As the Chancellor considers the praise which his Budget have earned this morning he should give some thought to Mr Howard. It is not always necessary to win your party's leadership election, or the opinion pollsters' beauty contests, to win a favourable verdict from posterity.

Mr Howard's political career was blighted by the defect of one of his great virtues. He was a formidable master of detail and an always polished advocate; but his facility at the dispatch box led many to conclude he was all polish and no oak. It was a conclusion as unfair as it was widespread, and unbudgeable. There may even have been a streak of anti-Semitism in it. It is noticeable that one of the few politicians to rival Mr Howard in his capacity to provoke unfair vilification is Peter Mandelson. As with Mr Howard, the criticism of "slippiness" hit an unfortunate note and damaged a talented minister.

Mr Mandelson, like Mr Howard, has not yet received the credit which is his due. In Mr Howard's case, it was the Government's approach to crime which he transformed. He came to the Home Office

determined to tackle a liberal orthodoxy which regarded a rising prison population with greater horror than rising crime figures. Mr Howard challenged departmental defeatism, pioneered changes to the criminal justice system and restored a proper emphasis on punishment. His determination to make prisons work, by instituting a regime which was "decent but austere", provoked howls of execration and predictions of uproar in the jails. The consequence, however, was a decline in criminality and a Labour Party converted to toughness on crime and private prisons.

Mr Howard was, however, much more than the right sort of penal reformer. He showed himself sensitive to rising public concern that civil society was under siege. As Home Secretary he instituted the Philip Lawrence Awards to promote good citizenship. His concern for the fabric of national life reflected a deep but unshowy patriotism which informed his practical and persuasive Euroscepticism.

There have been other ministers who never quite made it to the top of the greasy pole who have influenced the nation's life profoundly. Nye Bevan, Iain Macleod, Enoch Powell and Keith Joseph all, in their own way, left a deeper mark on the country than ostensibly more successful rivals. Michael Howard would be the first to demur when placed next to such exalted company, but in his own way he can take some pride in having been a success during the uneasy Major years. The truly successful politician has to be popular, and right. But Mr Howard should console himself that it is better if history judges one to be the latter rather than the former.

## A NEW BRIDGE

Readers of *The Times* give generously for Honduras

For the past five months the farmers of the fertile valleys in Olancho province have been unable to send their produce to the Honduran capital. Cut off by the destruction of the vital bridge that spanned the Amarante River, they have been unable to repair their homes, sell their crops or reconnect their shattered communities with the rest of Honduras as it struggles to overcome the effects of Hurricane Mitch. Thanks to the generosity of *Times* readers, their lifeline is to be restored. Next month work will begin on erecting a huge British-designed Bailey bridge supplied by the country's leading bridge engineers and paid for by donations to our Christmas appeal.

Readers have raised more than £100,000 to pay for a bridge at Rio Hondo. The response to our appeal has been extraordinary: some 1,491 readers sent money, some making very substantial donations, which has been topped up by a generous donation from Oxfam. Mabey & Johnson, whose ingenious modification of the wartime Bailey bridge design has proved a lifesaver around the world, has already made a free survey of the site and will this month start shipping out the steel sections.

The announcement that funds have been raised to pay for "The Times Bridge" coincides with a visit to the stricken

country by President Clinton. The Americans are promising substantial aid, focusing their efforts on rebuilding some of the 98 bridges that were washed away. Until the country's transport network can be repaired, all other reconstruction will be delayed. Currently materials cannot be sent to remote villages; farmers cannot sell their crops to pay for the rebuilding of their homes; labourers cannot find work; and Honduras cannot resume the exports which alone can raise money to service its heavy international debts.

Experts reckon that it may take another 30 years for Honduras to regain the standard of living it lost in one terrible week. At first politicians and farmers were numbered by the scale of the disaster. What encouraged them was the swift response of the rest of the world. Britain has historically had little connection with Central America. Yet this country has been among the most open-hearted and imaginative in its determination to help.

Thanks to the response of *Times* readers, Oxfam, Mabey & Johnson and hundreds of engineers who have given their expertise free, an entire community now has a bridge of hope to mark a path to recovery. For this they — and we — thank all those who have responded so magnificently to our appeal.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

### Heat in Hague's new Tory kitchen

From Mr Keith Robinson

Sir, The problem with Mr Hague's continual relaunching of Toryism (report, March 8) is that each time he does it, many Tories and Tory-doubters of around middle-age feel he is moving the party further and further away from its old, proven image of capable Conservative government.

As a fresh new face Mr Hague initially had the chance to resurrect the party image in the areas in which it was failing, and we wished him well. However, the stage has been reached where I, for one, feel little affinity for the party or its frontbench spokesmen and women. I believe the party should be bold enough to manoeuvre into place a personality who will remind people of its previous strengths, such as Michael Portillo or Chris Patten, and thus relieve William Hague of his uphill struggle to reinforce his own image by over-fiddling with Toryism.

If the policy gap between Labour and Conservative has really shrunk so much, then the choice becomes more and more one of personalities. Let's have someone better able to maximise the Tories' remaining policy advantages from the basis of personal strength and experience.

Yours faithfully,  
KEITH ROBINSON,  
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Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 3RA.  
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March 8.

From Miss Beryl M. Goldsmith

Sir, "Kitchen table Conservatism" is certainly not for those of us who have no intention of apologising for 18 years of Conservative administrations elected at four consecutive general elections.

Mr Hague should bear in mind that new Labour polled fewer (two million fewer) votes than did the Tories in 1992. For all their swagger, Liberal Democrats' vote was also well down.

Self-flagellation is an unbecoming pastime — especially on the kitchen table. The leaders of the Conservatives should stand up straight and follow the principles by which this country was governed for an unprecedented period and which led to genuine opportunities for the enterprising and the brave.

Yours faithfully,  
BERYL M. GOLDSMITH,  
34 Thomas More House,  
Barbican, EC2Y 8BT.  
March 8.

From Mr Robert Goddard

Sir, I noted with interest that one of Mr William Hague's campaigning criteria is "being for things as well as against them". Not only does this sound like a recipe for disaster, but it is not akin to having one's cake and eating it; to use language that would resonate with voters?

Loyally yours,  
ROBERT GODDARD,  
Lancelot Fleming House,  
Huntingdon Road,  
Cambridge CB3 0DQ.  
March 8.

From Mr P. R. Ridgway

Sir, I note that the Tory party is to concentrate on core issues, use plain language, be for things as well as against them, look to the future, admit the mistakes of the past, maintain a sense of proportion and show absolute integrity. Fine, but what are they going to say?

Yours sincerely,  
PHIL RIDGWAY,  
27 Nervative Meadows,  
Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1HU.  
March 8.

Withdrawing of legal aid

From Mr Benedict Birnberg

Sir, Against the almost unanimous opposition of the legal profession, the Government is to withdraw legal aid from most money claims and instead it has permitted lawyers to charge conditional fees.

If evidence is required of the effect this will have both on access to justice and on social evils, one need look no further than the collapse of the case of the 47 plaintiffs who sued the tobacco manufacturers Gallaher and Imperial Tobacco (report, February 27).

Their "no win, no fee" solicitors face expenses of £2.5 million, and in return for the companies not pursuing the litigants for costs, agreed not to take action against the two companies for ten years and against any tobacco firm for five years.

Class or multiparty actions like that of the tobacco litigants are a vital social resource, but if public funding is no longer available, which lawyer will risk bankrupting himself in future when taking on big and wealthy corporations?

The Government has yet to unveil its detailed plans for the Community Legal Service, but unless the service, which is to have a remit in cases involving "a wider public interest", fills the void left by the withdrawal of legal aid in such cases, what price community justice and wellbeing?

Yours faithfully,  
BENEDICT BIRNBURG,  
B. M. Birnberg & Co (solicitors),  
103 Borough High Street, SE1 1NN.  
March 9.

### Profit and poverty in trade war

From Mrs Glenna Kinnock, MEP

for South Wales East (Party of European Socialists Group (Labour))

Sir, The EU, as the world's largest trading bloc, faces threats from the US, hence the ongoing wrangling at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva (letters, March 5 and 8). We clearly face the challenge from a position of relative strength, and in the knowledge that retaliation is an option should it become necessary. Should the EU concede in any way to US bullying, where hope would there be for small countries?

There are deeper considerations here too. If we are to be blackmailed in this way on bananas, where will we be challenged next? Blatant manipulation of the WTO disputes procedure should not be permitted in this, or in other cases.

I am also concerned that Alex Salmond, the leader of the Scottish National Party, is using the clear threat to Scottish jobs brought about by the dispute to undermine the Labour Party's campaign in the Scottish parliamentary elections. I believe, however, that the UK Government's resolve to support our Caribbean banana producers will not be weakened by its tactics.

Finally it is important to ask who is actually driving US trade policy. What is the role of Chiquita, the multinational banana company based in Cincinnati? The Latin American producers have two thirds of the market, so why do Chiquita resent the 7 per cent of that market currently held by Caribbean countries?

It is important that US politicians know that in Europe we are aware of the machinations which have preceded this banana row. Are they not aware that they are threatening the livelihoods of poor farmers who have a unique dependence on a single commodity? If they claim they are not, then we should counsel them that the

### Older teachers

From Mr David Walker

Sir, Your leading article, "Bring back Mr Chips", and report (March 2) talk good sense. I have been applying for teaching jobs for some time, aged 52, having taken a long break from the classroom and gained wide management experience and qualifications. The extra £2,000-£3,000 payable to me over a new entrant puts off some schools with tight budgets, but a greater deterrent is the feeling that an older applicant is less malleable, adaptable or able to cope with all the new procedures.

I submit that we mature applicants are just that — we adapt better, being perhaps less prone to fixed ideas, are more detached and, by virtue of our experience elsewhere, can certainly assimilate the paperwork.

The trouble is, as in all jobs when you get turned down, "ageism" is a moveable target and hard to pin down.

The children in our schools could only benefit.

Yours sincerely,  
V. M. PRICE,  
Tovale, Lloyd Road,  
Stockwell End,  
Wolverhampton WV6 9AU.  
March 2.

### Bombing Iraq

From Mr Patrick Butterly

Sir, Simon Jenkins's views (article, March 8; letters, March 6, 8) on the Anglo-American bombing of Iraq were both heartwarming in their honesty and distressing in their content.

Policemen have to make moral judgments and decisions in attempting to foresee the consequences of the measures they propose. But they owe a duty to the electorate to explain why they have come to the conclusions they have. Despite the Secretary of State for Defence's letter, I still do not believe we have had an adequate explanation of the bombing of Iraq.

Yours faithfully,  
P. BUTTERLY,  
1 Vine Cottages, Downs View,  
West Looe, Cornwall PL13 2EY.  
March 8.

### Catholics and charity

From the Chief Executive of Comic Relief

Sir, Comic Relief takes the spending of money donated by the public very seriously. All of the money goes to tackle poverty and promote social justice — not a penny to "morally dubious family planning projects" (Mr Alan Whelan's letter, March 4). We are committed to knowledge and education over ignorance and prejudice.

Some Red Nose money has gone to projects in Africa which reduce the damage done to women and girls by abortion and promote maternal health and safety. We have long funded CAFOD, Christian Aid and other such organisations, which support our work fully.

Yours faithfully,  
TONY OWEN,  
12 The Maltings,  
Orpington, Kent BR6 0DH.  
March 9.

Letters may be faxed to 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

### Pontius Pilate's place in history

From Mr A. J. Russell

Sir,

There is one odd thing about Pontius Pilate that might be added to Peter Stothard's interesting article (Wednesday, March 6). Weak, wicked or whatever he was, his name is one of only two (apart from Jesus) preserved in the Nicene Creed recited regularly by a billion people as a summary of their faith, as the revered Virgin Mary is the other, and there is no room in its compact phrases for heroes even of St Peter, this seems to be a very strange honour for him.

In fact, the Creed's statement that Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate" is an economical way of making a major point, rooting the Christian faith in historical fact rather than spiritual myth.

However, there is also a delicious irony, pointed out by Ronald Knox in *The Creed in Slow Motion* (Sheed and Ward, 1950). Pilate, the man who so famously asked "What is truth?", is now stuck in the middle of the Creed, "as if the Church were determined to go on saying to him, to the end of time, 'Here, you fool, this is!'"

Yours faithfully,  
ADRIAN RUSSELL,  
60 High Street, Lytchett Matravers,  
Poole, Dorset BH16 6BH.  
March 8.

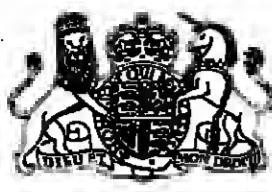
### From Ms Jean Goldman

Sir, I read with interest Peter Stothard's article and noted the remark made by his yoghurt salesman guide that "it was the Jews who killed Christ".

In 1965 the Vatican decree *Nostra Aetate* repudiated the charge of deicide which for centuries had been made against the Jews, and in 1985 the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jewish People published its *Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis*. This document acknowledged that the gospels have been subject to long and often complicated editorial work and that "certain controversies reflect Christian-Jewish relations long after the time of Jesus".

However, I wonder how many laypeople actually read such documents? Perhaps it is time for the Church to take the bold step of excising gospel material which is of doubtful veracity and therefore offensive to Jews (in particular Matthew xxvi, 25); or is the New Testament exempt from the law concerning the publication of racially offensive material?

Yours faithfully,  
JEAN GOLDMAN,  
73 Burleigh Road,  
Enfield EN1 1



## COURT CIRCULAR

**BUCKINGHAM PALACE**

March 9: The Queen held an Investiture this morning at Buckingham Palace.

The Hon Mary Morrison has succeeded Lady Dugdale as Lady in Waiting to the Queen.

March 9: The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron, Voluntary Service Overseas, this morning received Mr David Green at Buckingham Palace.

His Royal Highness, President, later chaired a Meeting of the Royal Mini Advisory Committee at Buckingham Palace.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron, today attended the Federation of London Youth Clubs' Lunch at Tallow Chanders' Hall, Dowgate Hill, London EC4.

His Royal Highness, President Emeritus, World Wide Fund for Nature - WWF International, this afternoon received Dr Chris Ellice.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron, this evening attended the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers' Reception at Buckingham Palace.

**CLARENCE HOUSE**

March 9: The Lady Angela Oswald has succeeded Mrs Michael Gordon Lennox as Lady-in-Waiting in Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

**ST JAMES'S PALACE**

March 9: The Prince of Wales this morning arrived in the Argentine Republic where he was greeted on arrival by His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Argentina, Sen Guido Di Tella.

His Royal Highness afterwards was received by the President of the Republic, Dr Carlos Menem, at the Casa Rosada.

The Prince of Wales later laid wreaths at the St Martin and the South Atlantic Memorials.

His Royal Highness then visited the British Arts Centre in Buenos Aires. His Royal Highness, as President of The Prince of Wales Business Forum, subsequently attended a luncheon for business leaders.

This afternoon His Royal Highness visited the British Hospital in Buenos Aires. His Royal Highness, as President of The Prince of Wales Business Forum, subsequently attended a luncheon for business leaders.

The Prince of Wales this evening attended a dinner given in his honour by the President of Argentina at the Alvear Palace Hotel.

## Birthdays today

Prince Edward celebrates his 35th birthday today.

Sir Laurence Airey, former chairman, Board of Inland Revenue, 73; Sir Robert Bellinger, former president, National Savings Committee, 80; Air Chief Marshal Sir Brian Burnett, 80; Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, 52; Mr Fou Tsong, concert pianist, 65; Sir Angus Fraser, former chairman, Board of Customs and Excise, 71; Dame Margaret Ivy, former chairman, National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, 68.

**BUCKINGHAM PALACE**

March 9: The Prince Edward, Chairman, this evening attended a Dinner of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Young Canadians Challenge Charter for Business at the Vancouver Club, British Columbia, Canada.

**BUCKINGHAM PALACE**

March 9: The Princess Royal today carried out the following engagements in Tokyo, Japan:

Her Royal Highness this morning visited HELP Asian Women's Shelter (battered wives).

The Princess Royal later visited Grace House (maternity centre for women).

Her Royal Highness subsequently attended the Liberty Promotion Reception at the British Ambassador's Residence.

The Princess Royal had lunch at the Ark Hills Club with Young British Residents of Tokyo.

Her Royal Highness this afternoon visited the Shinjuku Sports Centre for Disabled at the National Welfare Centre.

The Princess Royal later attended the launch of the Exhibition "Millennium Science Forum" at the British Embassy.

Her Royal Highness this evening attended a reception for the "Noble Horn" exhibition at the new Onari Hotel.

The Princess Royal later attended a dinner given by Her Majesty's Ambassador to Japan, His Excellency Sir David Wright at his residence.

**ST JAMES'S PALACE**

March 9: The Duke of Kent, President of the Royal United Services Institute, this morning presided over the Nato 50th Anniversary Conference, Banqueting House, Whitehall, London SW1.

His Royal Highness this evening attended the Nato 50th Anniversary Reception and Dinner, Banqueting House, Whitehall, London, SW1.

Nicolas Adamson was in attendance.

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The Prince of Wales (King Edward VII) married Princess Alexandra of Denmark, 1893.

Velizquez's *Rokeby Venus* in the National Gallery was damaged during suffragette demonstrations in London, 1914.

A Japanese soldier, believing that the Second World War was still being fought, was found in hiding on Lubang Island in the Philippines, waiting to be relieved, 1974.

## Memorial service

**Mr Peter Carey**

A service of thanksgiving for the life of Mr Peter Carey was held yesterday at St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey. The Rev Robert Wright, Rector, officiated and the Right Rev Lord Coggan led the prayers.

Mr Oliver Parker read the lesson. Mr Jonathan Carey, brother, and Mr James Hughes-Hallett gave readings.

Mr Mark Malloch-Brown paid tribute and the Dean of Westminster pronounced the blessing.

Mr Care (widower), Mrs David Carey (husband and mother), Mr and Mrs Alastair Carey (brother and sister-in-law), Miss Anne Carey (sister), Dr and Mrs William Goss (son and daughter-in-law), Mr Philip George (brother-in-law), Mrs Jonathan Carey (sister-in-law) and other members of the family; Lady Coggan and other friends.

## Hill House

Former pupils and staff of Hill House International Junior School are invited to a reception on April 23 to mark the 50th anniversary of the school's foundation. Please write to the school with your current address and date at Hill House for full details and an invitation.

## Luncheons

Tallow Chanders' Company

The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron of the London Federation of Youth Clubs, attended a luncheon of the Tallow Chanders' Company held yesterday at Tallow Chanders' Hall, Mill R.A.B. Nicoll, Master.

**Service reception**

London URNU

Rear-Admiral J.M. de Halpert was the guest of honour at the annual reception of the University of London Royal Naval Unit held last night at the Brompton Road Headquarters.

Lieutenant Commander T.J. Hill, Officer-in-Charge, was the host.

## Reception

Swaziland Society

The King of Swaziland, accompanied by the Indokosikai, Prince Maguapa and Princess Lomhlonga, attended a reception of the Swaziland Society held last night at the Hyatt Carlton Tower Hotel.

Mr Brian Watkins, chairman, invited the guests who included High Commissioners, Ambassadors and other members of the Diplomatic Corps.



The Dutch photographer Rinke Dijkstra has won the Citibank Private Bank Photography Prize for 1999. This picture of a young Polish girl on the beach at Kolobrzeg is one of a number of photographs she has taken of young people on beaches from Long Island to Ukraine, catching them between childhood and adulthood. Her work, and that of the four others shortlisted for the prize, are on show at The Photographers' Gallery, Great Newport Street, London WC2.

(0171-831-1772) until April 3. The prize is sponsored by *The Times*

## Today's royal engagements

The Duke of York will give a reception for Understanding Industry at St James's Palace this evening. The Duke of Gloucester, as commissioner, English Heritage, will visit Bradbourne House, East Malling, Kent, at 12.15, and as grand prior, Order of St John, will open the new St John Ambulance County Headquarters in West Malling, at 2.30.

## Anniversaries

BIRTHS: John Benbow, admiral, Shrewsbury, 1653; John Playfair, geologist and philosopher, Berwick-upon-Tweed, 1748; Leonard Ravenhill, author and evangelist, 1790; Sir Charles Brinsford, Chief Executive of Portsmouth & Sunderland Newspapers and President of the Adscene Group, the Managing Director of Monitors of Homeless and the Editor of the Newcastle Chronicle and Journal, 1983.

DEATHS: John Stuart Bute, 3rd Earl of Bute, Prime Minister 1762-63, London, 1792; Muzio Clementi, pianist and composer, Evesham, 1832; Taras Shevchenko, poet, Ukraine, 1861; Giuseppe Mazzini, Italian patriot, Pisa, 1872; Sir Charles Thomson, naturalist, Bonyside, Lothian, 1882; Charles

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## Appointments

British Wizo

Ms Sarah Glynn has been appointed Chairman of British Wizo (Women's International Zionist Organisation), Mrs Loraine Warren Honorary Secretary, and Mrs Ruth Sutnick President.

The Speaker

The Speaker gave a dinner last night in Speaker's House in honour of a Parliamentary Delegation from Latvia, led by Mr Janis Straupe, Speaker of the Seimas. The Ambassador of Latvia was present.

The other guests were:

Sir Alan Gledhill, MP, Mr Ben Bradshaw, MP, Mr Richard Bunker, MP, Mr Roger Casals, MP, Sir Sydney Chapman, MP, Mr Michael Colvin, MP, Mr Tony Houghton, MP, Mr Philip Hodge, MP, Mr Mike Hancock, MP, Mr Nick Hawkins, MP, Mr Stephen Hepburn, MP, Dr David Howarth, MP, Mrs Christine Russell, MP, the Rev Martin Smyth, MP, Mr John Townend, MP, Dr Desmond Turner, MP, Mr John Wilkinson, MP, Mr Michael Lowry, MP, Mr Jim Rodger, Mr Silvers Seavick, Ms Teresia Sylwan, Canon Robert Wright and Mr Nicolas Bevan.

Pipeline Industries Guild

Ms Jane Asher, President of the National Agricultural Society, and Mr Barry Took, were the guests of honour at the annual dinner of the Pipeline Industries Guild held last night at Grosvenor House.

Professor Andrew Palmer, president, was in the chair. Mr Roberto Pirani, chairman, also spoke.

Frederick Worth, fashion designer, 1895; David Beatty, 1st Earl Beatty, Admiral of the Fleet, 1936; Mikhail Bulgakov, dramatist and novelist, Moscow, 1940; Laurence Binyon, poet, Read, 1943; Jan Masaryk, statesman, Prague, 1948; Frank O'Connor, short story writer, Dublin, 1966; Konstantin Chernenko, General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party 1984-85, Moscow, 1985.

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Family dinners only, but donations to charities of Jackie and Helen. Interment took place on 6th March at Tingwall, Shetland.

## Appointments

PEAL - Round Edmund

Fraser peacefully on March 8th after a long fight against illness. Very much loved by his family and grandfather.

Service of Thanksgiving for family and friends.

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999

## OBITUARIES

## DUNCAN DEWDNEY

Duncan Dewdney, CBE, oil industry executive, died on February 11 aged 87. He was born on October 22, 1911.

**DUNCAN DEWDNEY** had a long career to the oil industry, working both in research and in industrial relations.

Educated at Bromsgrove School and Birmingham University, Duncan Alexander Cox Dewdney joined British Petroleum in 1932. He then worked for an organisation set up by Standard Oil to assist its for-



ign affiliates, such as Anglo-American Oil in Britain. This work took him to Germany, and also gave him experience of the aviation industry.

He was thus highly qualified to become civilian oil adviser to Bomber Command. In 1939 he was commissioned into the RAF as a wing commander, advising the Air Ministry on the effects of bomb damage, and analysing the impact of the bombing campaign on the German war effort.

After the war he worked for six years as research manager at Esso Development in Abingdon. In 1951 he moved to Esso Petroleum (as the Anglo-American Oil Company had become) as assistant manager at the

newly expanded Fawley Refinery. In 1957 he joined the Esso board, where he now became the leader of the team which developed the "Fawley Blue Book", widely regarded as perhaps the most significant development in British productivity bargaining this century.

Esso was at the time developing Irish Refining as a joint venture with Shell, BP and Texaco, to build a refinery to supply the Irish Republic. Dewdney was chairman of the joint company from 1958 to 1965.

From 1963 to 1967 he was the managing director at Esso responsible for refining and corporate planning, and he was seconded to the National Board of Prices and Incomes from 1965 to 1967. One of his assignments was to improve the productivity of the printing industry. His conclusion was that no progress would be made unless a proprietor was prepared to have a massive confrontation with the unions, including plant shutdowns, but at that time no one had the courage.

In 1968 he was appointed deputy chairman of Esso, but he shortly afterwards resigned to become an executive director of KTC. He had responsibility for the KTC interest in the Channel Tunnel and then for a projected aluminium smelter in Anglesey. The economics of both defeated him, however, and he retired in 1972.

In retirement he was a director of the Coverdale Organisation and deputy chairman of the Manpower Services Commission from 1974 to 1977.

Duncan Dewdney was appointed CBE in 1968. His wife Ann, whom he married in 1935, predeceased him in 1993. He is survived by their two daughters.

**Arnold Machin, OBE, RA**, sculptor, died yesterday aged 87. He was born on September 30, 1911.

**A**rnold Machin is certainly of an enduring if anonymous fame — millions of people in Britain and around the world know his work, though few know his name. Every coin of Queen Elizabeth II's reign minted from 1964 to 1985 carried his effigy of the Queen, and every one of the billions of British definitive stamps issued since 1967 has carried another, different, effigy by Machin. But these represent just one aspect of a busy life.

Arnold Machin was born at Trent Vale, Stoke-on-Trent, of a family of potters. He was educated locally, and when he left school joined the firm of Minton as a figure painter on china. But he also studied part-time at Stoke School of Art, and a teacher who worked for Minton and later Wedgwood introduced him to the delights of modelling in terracotta. This led to a job with the Crown Derby porcelain works. From there, a scholarship took him to Derby School of Art in 1934, and his talent then secured him a place at the Royal College of Art in London, where he studied from 1937 to 1940, working mostly in terracotta sculpture under Professor Richard Garbe.

Machin won a Silver Medal and a Travelling Scholarship for Sculpture from the Royal College in 1940, but since it was wartime he was unable to take advantage of this. However, early success came to him that year: a terracotta of a mother and child was accepted for the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition; and Machin

was taken on by Wedgwood as an adviser on figure work. In 1941, back in the Potteries, he caused quite a stir with 15 terracotta figures at the exhibition in Hanley of the Society of Staffordshire Artists.

Throughout his life Machin was concerned with the themes of the Annunciation, with its figures of Angel and Virgin, and Spring or Primavera. In 1944 the Tate Gallery bought two of his works through the Knapping Fund, an Annunciation group and a

St John the Baptist. A further acquisition followed in 1947, when the Chantrey Bequest donated to the Tate an almost life-sized figure of Spring, exhibited that year at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition.

Machin was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy in that year, and became a full Academician in 1956. He taught at the Royal College of Art from 1951 to 1958, and was then Master of Sculpture at the Royal Academy Schools from 1958 to 1967. Where he



Machin in 1967 with his relief portrait of the Queen, which is still in use on definitive stamps after more than 30 years

became the mentor of many young sculptors.

In 1964 Machin was selected to sculpt a new effigy of the Queen for the new British coinage, to supersede that by Mary Gillick. Apart from the choice of designer in such cases, there are other decisions to be made, such as whether to portray a crown, dura, diadem or laurel wreath on the hair, and whether it should be a bust or merely the head of the Sovereign. The final choice is

Machin's effigy appeared on the new decimal coinage introduced in 1968, and full decimalisation followed in 1971. This effigy remained on the coinage until superseded by Raphael Maklouf's in 1985, which was used until 1997.

The royal effigy on postage stamps does not inevitably follow that of the coinage or change at the same time.

However, after five artists had been asked to submit designs for the new for stamps in 1967, Machin, who took his inspira-

tion from the Penny Black, was chosen again. He produced another portrait in relief sculpture, to give a striking cameo effect. Lighting and shadowing such a sculpture to maximise the effect of character in a photograph is difficult; the ideal lighting was eventually achieved in this case outside in a car park on a foggy day.

The Postmaster General, Edward Short, described the Machin design as "one of the greatest stamps of all time", and the Queen saw no need to change the royal image on the stamps when the effigy on the coinage was changed in 1985.

Machin was also involved in various other commissions, principally for Wedgwood, for whom he designed a set of ceramic chessmen and produced many portraits of the Royal Family.

As a sculptor married to a flower painter, he was naturally drawn to garden design, which became one of his major hobbies, and Machin involved himself in a substantial undertaking at his home near Eccleshall, Staffordshire, where he created a large garden of paths and perspectives, loggias and grottos, waterfalls and fountains, interspersed with urns, ornaments and sculpture, and rich with roses.

In 1997 he was prominent among the Academicians who protested at the Sensation exhibition, which included a portrait of the murderer Myra Hindley, made with children's handprints. Machin described the show as pornographic rubbish.

He was appointed OBE in 1965.

Arnold Machin married Patricia Newton, the flower painter, in 1949. She survives him, along with a son.

## GLENN SEABORG

Glenn Seaborg, American nuclear scientist and Nobel laureate, died in Lafayette, California, on February 25 aged 86. He was born on April 12, 1912.

OF ALL the radioactive elements synthesised by Glenn Seaborg and his team at Berkeley, California, the most important in terms of its impact on history was the fissile isotope of plutonium, plutonium-239, created in 1941. Unlike uranium (atomic number 92), which is the most abundant radioactive element in the Earth's crust, plutonium-94 scarcely occurs in nature, and useful amounts can be obtained only by setting up reactions with uranium.

Seaborg and his co-workers had already, in 1940, synthesised plutonium-238 by bombarding uranium with deuterons in the Berkeley

cyclotron. They created plutonium-239 in the following year by neutron bombardment of uranium-238. The element was to make its devastating debut as a weapon in the second of the nuclear bombs used against Japan in 1945. "Fat Man", dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, three days after the devastation of Hiroshima by the uranium weapon "Little Boy", was a plutonium bomb. Although the topography of the city saved it from the almost total destruction that befell Hiroshima, more than 73,000 of its population of 212,000 were killed and an equal number were injured.

Of his reaction to his work, Seaborg said recently: "I was a 28-year-old kid and I didn't stop to think about it. I didn't think 'My God, we've changed the world'." However, Seaborg was disturbed

enough about his creation — as the war in Europe ended while that in the Far East continued, promising heavy American casualties — to sign a report produced by a number of his Manhattan Project colleagues, beginning President Truman to demonstrate nuclear weapons to Japanese scientists before using them on the populace.

In later life Seaborg worked to extend the peaceful use of atomic energy, as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) from 1961 to 1977. He also championed Operation Ploughshare, the notion of using atomic explosions for large-scale excavation. But this came under fire from environmentalists in the 1970s, when it was realised that there would be massive contamination of areas contiguous to nuclear blasting.

Seaborg was also criticised for the

AEC's handling of nuclear waste, and when it was discovered that sand being used as free landfill by property developers was radioactive.

Plutonium was the second of the transuranic elements (those that lie higher than uranium in the periodic table) to be "discovered". No. 93, neptunium, was synthesised in 1940 by Edwin McMillan, who shared with Seaborg the 1951 Nobel Prize for Chemistry.

Glenn Theodore Seaborg was born in Ishpeming, Michigan, of Swedish immigrant parents. He grew up retaining his Swedish culture; indeed, when he went to Stockholm to receive his Nobel Prize he began his address in Swedish.

When he was ten his family moved to California where, after starting literary studies at UCLA, he switched to chemistry at Berkeley. There he

worked with such founding fathers of nuclear physics as J. Robert Oppenheimer, and when war came to the US in 1941 he was seconded to the Manhattan Project to build the atomic bomb, as a section chief at Chicago University.

After the war he returned to Berkeley, where he continued his work on transuranic elements. After plutonium, among those he identified were americium (95), berkelium (97), einsteinium (99), fermium (100) and nobelium (102). And in 1997 Seaborg achieved what neither Einstein nor Fermi had managed when element 106 was named seaborgium. It was the first time a living scientist had had an element named after him.

Glenn Seaborg is survived by his wife, Helen, whom he married in 1942, and by three sons and two daughters.



Seaborg in his laboratory at Berkeley, California, in 1941

## WANTED

## FOR SALE

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## FLIGHT SEARCHERS

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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## PUBLIC NOTICES

## THE TIMES TODAY

WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999

## BUDGET

**Showman Brown's 22p tax shock**

Gordon Brown pulled a £4 billion tax surprise out of the hat yesterday with a cut in the basic rate of income tax to 22p next year and the immediate introduction of the long-promised 10p starting rate. The Chancellor of the Exchequer delighted Labour MPs with a spend-and-tax-cut package with all the hallmarks of a pre-election Budget. .... Page 1, 9-20

**Relief for elderly**

Ten million pensioners will benefit from a five-fold increase in the winter fuel payment £100 per household from this year, as part of a £3 billion package of measures aimed at relieving poverty among the elderly. .... Page 10

**Miras abolished**

The abolition of mortgage interest relief at source ends one of middle England's most cherished perks, but estate agents said it would have little effect on the health of the property market. .... Page 11

**Cigarettes up 17.5p**

The day of the 20p cigarette moved nearer last night. City analysts saw the 17.5p immediate increase in the price of 20 cigarettes as a classic example of taxation by stealth. .... Page 18

## NEWS

**Prince strengthens ties with Argentina**

The Prince of Wales launched into one of his most delicate diplomatic missions when he arrived in Buenos Aires for a three-day visit to Argentina. At a wreath-laying ceremony at the statue of José de San Martín, the national hero, the Prince said: "We are delighted by the steady rehabilitation of the close relationship which can and should exist between us". .... Page 2

**Death pact 'invented'**

A one-time girlfriend of the Oasis singer Liam Gallagher was strangled by her possessive lover, a former soldier in the Israeli army, who tried to hide the crime by inventing a suicide pact, the Royal College of Nursing agreed. .... Page 6

**Officer suspended**

The Chief Constable of Sussex Police was suspended over a raid in which an unarmed suspect was shot. Paul Whitehouse, 53, was on holiday abroad when the decision was announced. .... Page 4

**Derwent flood danger**

Hundreds of riverside households are preparing for the highest flood levels this century. Red alerts were issued in villages near York as a surge flooded down the River Derwent. .... Page 5

**Drop in small car tax**

Drivers of the smallest cars were given a £55 reduction in their car tax as Mr Brown called for wider use of vehicles which caused less pollution. Owners of cars with engine size below 1100cc will pay £100 a year from June. .... Page 12

**Computer revolution**

Cybercafes in every region of Britain will offer the on-line equivalent of the public library, while tax breaks aim to encourage up to one million adults to hone their keyboard skills. .... Page 13

**Hague hits 'stealth'**

William Hague said Gordon Brown was a "pickpocket Chancellor" who was raising taxes by stealth. The Tory leader accused Labour of punishing savers and paralysing business. .... Page 18



Huge back-to-front cardigans hid many of the Africa-inspired designs in the Christian Dior collection unveiled in Paris. Report, page 3

## BUSINESS

**Sony jobs**: Hundreds of jobs could be under threat in Wales after Sony Corporation said that it would cut 17,000 jobs — 10 per cent of its worldwide workforce. .... Page 29

**Tobacco sale**: RJR Nabisco acted to thwart an expected courtroom coup by Carl Icahn by selling its international tobacco business for £5 billion and splitting its US tobacco and food interests. .... Page 29

**Coats row**: Sir David Alliance, the founder of Coats Viyella and its chairman for the past decade, could face pressure from institutional investors to resign. .... Page 30

**Markets**: The FTSE 100 index rose 28.90 points to 6237.7. The pound rose 0.66 cents to \$1.6149 and 0.24p against the euro to 76.43p. The sterling index rose to 102.5. .... Page 32

**Nurses back the pill**

School nurses should be authorised to hand out morning-after contraceptive pills and give family planning advice to all children in secondary schools, including under-16s, the Royal College of Nursing agreed. .... Page 6

**Football**: John Gregory, the Aston Villa manager, yesterday conceded for the first time that his stressed striker, Stan Collymore, is a "sick man", and is suffering clinical depression. .... Page 56

**Boxing**: Lennox Lewis is sceptical about whether Americans will give him his due if he beats Evander Holyfield, because their press has always been against him. .... Page 56

**Cricket**: Shockwaves were still reverberating around the Caribbean as the West Indies tried to come to terms with the worst disaster in their cricket history. .... Page 51

**Euro-opera**: In Monte Carlo, Robert Alagna and Angela Gheorghiu, opera's golden couple, get a cheer even when they mess it up; and Bordeaux laps up Handel's *Giulio Cesare*. .... Page 54

**Scalactic**: .... Page 44

**Drip feed**: The Tate Gallery's survey of the work of Jackson Pollock reveals the great American painter at his most ferocious and also his most vulnerable. .... Page 41

**Diamond geezer**: The veteran singer Neil Diamond kicks off his sold-out shows at Wembley Arena with two-and-a-half hours of Diamond classics. .... Page 42

**Outrageous fortune**: Greenwich Theatre sees the culmination this weekend of a theatre project in which 19 amateur groups put their own spin on *Hamlet*. .... Page 43

**Top dogs**: From tomorrow, 110,000 dog lovers will travel to Crufts at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. .... Pages 46, 47

**Lost Jews**: Members of the Lemba, a 70,000-strong tribe scattered across southern Africa, show genetic similarities with the inhabitants of a south Arabian region where a thriving Jewish population existed a millennium ago. .... Page 22

**Nigel Hawkes**: How scientists hope to deal with the bad-egg smell of hydrogen sulphide drifting out of the Parisian soil. .... Page 22

**Howard's end**: The truly successful politician has to be popular, and right. Michael Howard should console himself that it is better if history judges one to be the latter rather than the former. .... Page 25

**A new bridge**: For the past five months the farmers of Olancha province have been unable to send their produce to the Honduran capital, cut off by the destruction of a vital bridge. Thanks to *Times* readers, their lifeline is to be restored. .... Page 25

## RADIO &amp; TV

**Preview**: How Britons exist in Holland's city of drugs. *Amsterdam* (BBC2, 9pm) Review: Joe Joseph on ITV's new drama *Wonderful You* (ITV, 10pm) .... Pages 54, 55

## OPINION

**Essence of Brown**

This Budget represents the essence of new Labour, delivering many of its traditional aims in a sophisticated way which puts its opponents in all sorts of trouble. .... Page 25

**Howard's end**

The truly successful politician has to be popular, and right. Michael Howard should console himself that it is better if history judges one to be the latter rather than the former. .... Page 25

**A new bridge**

For the past five months the farmers of Olancha province have been unable to send their produce to the Honduran capital, cut off by the destruction of a vital bridge. Thanks to *Times* readers, their lifeline is to be restored. .... Page 25

## COLUMNS

**ANATOLE KALETSKY**

This package, while it may initially be greeted as the cleverest of Mr Brown's Budgets, really does seem too good to be true. .... Page 9

**MATTHEW PARRIS**

The Opposition leader's response, launched from a heap of crumpled papers, was feisty and sharp. Those doubting Hague's resilience should note the way he punched his way out of a corner. .... Page 1

**PETER RIDDELL**

The only announcement missing from Mr Brown's speech was the date of the next election. .... Page 24

**SIMON JENKINS**

There were actually three Budgets this year but they let you see only one. .... Page 24

**ALAN COREN**

God knows why they asked, I had never done a voiceover, but the Saatchis wanted a man to whom cats would listen. .... Page 24

## OBITUARIES

**Arnold Machin**, sculptor; **Glenn Seaborg**, scientist; **Duncan Dewdney**, oil executive. .... Page 27

## LETTERS

Kitchen table Conservatives; bananas; Pontius Pilate; older teachers; bombing Iraq; legal aid; Catholics and Red Nose Day. .... Page 25

## THE PAPERS

It is alarming to discover that lax security at the Los Alamos nuclear weapons laboratory in the mid-1980s may have let China steal secret designs for one of America's most compact nuclear warheads. It is also troubling to learn that the Clinton Administration did not react vigorously enough when it first heard of this possible breach of national security. Some Administration officials suggest that the White House may have minimized the case to insulate its goal of improving relations with Beijing. .... The New York Times

## TOMORROW

## IN THE TIMES

**FILMS**

Robin Williams, right, plays Patch Adams, a doctor who can't help but clown around

**BOOKS**

Erica Wagner listens to Andrew Morton tell Monica Lewinsky's story; Robert Nye on Peter Porter

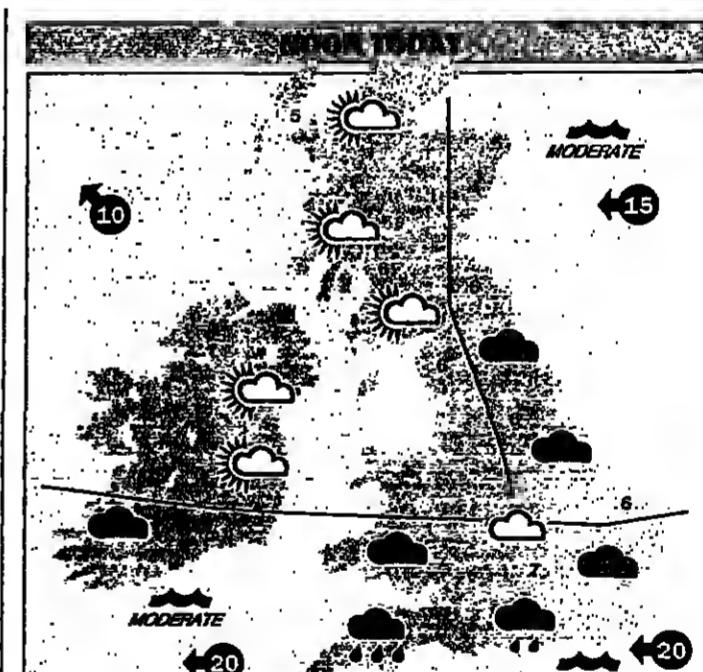
## TODAY

## FORECAST

## AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

## WEATHER

## TOMORROW



Have a  
share in  
the arts

Page 43



BUSINESS • ARTS • SPORT • TELEVISION

DIVISION

# THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999

Diamond  
sparkles  
on today  
Arts, page 42

## Retail plaudits for Budget

### But there is only a cautious welcome for the Chancellor from the City

BY OUR BUSINESS STAFF

**RETAILERS** emerged as the big Budget winners yesterday, boosted by measures to help lower-income consumers. But the City was more cautious, and the financial services industry expressed concern at Gordon Brown's move to publish league tables of the charges and costs of pension savings and insurance products.

Lord Harris of Peckham, chairman of Carpetright, said: "I think it is a good Budget for my business. This is a Budget that will get people spending, especially at the bottom end."

Leading shares garnered broad support from the Budget, with the FTSE 100 closing 28.9 at 6237.7 after being little changed when the Chancellor began his Budget speech.

The pound also strengthened as traders concluded the Bank of England may now prove more reluctant to cut interest rates. The pound rose 1 cent to \$1.6183. Against sterling the euro fell to 67.23p from 67.67p.

Prominent among rising shares was Dixons, the electricals retailer, which rose 50p to a new high of £12.18, as the Government set out plans to spend £1.7 billion on a "computers for all" initiative.

Big business gave a grudging welcome to the Chancellor's "enterprise" Budget but the measures to help new ventures and start-ups were criticised as modest and Mr Brown had a sting in the tail for manufacturers, with the promise of an energy tax that would increase costs for capital-intensive industries.

The Confederation of British Industry said there was no radical change for business. Adair Turner, the CBI Director-General, said: "We asked for a boring Budget and this is not a bad result. The fiscal balance is reasonable, provided that the economic recovery takes place in line with the Chancellor's projections."

The Institute of Directors, that lobbies for smaller busi-

nesses, welcomed Gordon Brown's focus on lower taxes, including a new 10 per cent rate for the smallest businesses and equity incentives for management to join new ventures.

However, the IOD queried whether the Government would meet its growth targets. Ruth Lee, head of policy, said: "It was really quite a generous Budget. We welcome the corporation tax cuts, we welcome the Small Business Agency. We get very positive messages from this Government but we still have to cope with measures like the Working Time Directive."

The TUC said the Chancellor's Budget forecast of rising Government surpluses justified the case for an early cut in base rates. John Monks, TUC General Secretary, said: "I am now looking to the Bank of England to play their part in ensuring a soft landing for the economy."

TUC institutions were more than cautious in their welcome of the Budget. Jeremy Batstone, head of research at NatWest Stockbrokers, said: "The speech looked better than it was."

The financial services sector gave a lukewarm response to

Mr Brown's announcement that the Financial Services Authority, the leading City regulator, is to publish league tables of the charges and costs of pension savings and insurance products.

Richard Roys, managing director of Mercury Asset Management's retail fund business, said: "There is nothing wrong with publishing charge or rate sheets. But the problem is that charges are only part of the equation. One must also look at performance, and performance relative to the benchmarks set for the funds."

The freeze on alcohol duty brought a muted cheer from Britain's brewers but Mr Brown was dubbed the King Canute Chancellor by disgruntled retailers after his decision to put an extra 17½p on a packet of cigarettes.

The Tobacco Alliance, that represents the interests of 26,000 independent shopkeepers, described the rise as "bewildering", given that recent statistics showed that smoking in the UK had increased for the first

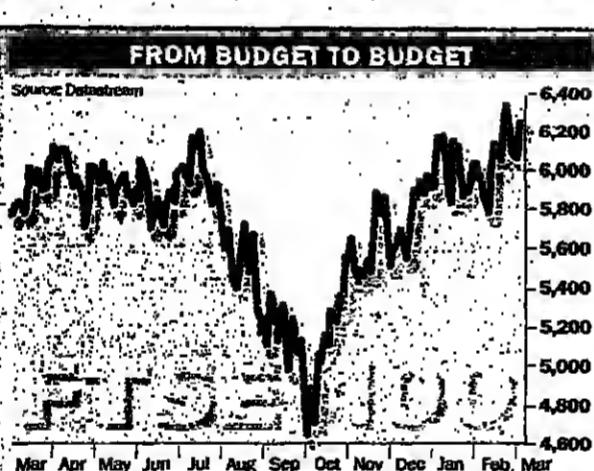
time in living memory" due to smuggling of cheap foreign tobacco which, at the same time, deprives the Treasury of more than £1 billion in tax.

Commercial property companies, already suffering from investor disenchantment, suffered a severe blow yesterday when the Chancellor raised stamp duty by 1 per cent to 3½ per cent on transactions over £250,000. FPD Savills, the chartered surveyors warned that it would further penalise property as an asset compared with bonds and shares. A spokesman for Savills Fund Management said that the total cost of buying and selling a commercial building had now risen to 7 per cent, including agency and legal fees and VAT.

Venture capitalists were sceptical about the impact of the incentives for new businesses. Britain's largest backer of small businesses, 3i, criticised the Government's failure to reduce the impact of capital gains tax (CGT). Charles Richardson, director of corporate affairs at 3i, said: "The UK is out of line with the rest of the world and we need a radical reduction in the starting rate of CGT." He said that Ireland had reduced it from 40 per cent to 20 per cent while 20 per cent was the norm in the US. Mr Richardson also said that the rules that require an investor to hold on to his stake for ten years were too long. "For serious high-tech businesses, five years is a maximum."

Britain's smokestack industries, already suffering from the strong pound, warned the Chancellor not to penalise them with the planned Climate Change levy. The levy is intended to meet Britain's commitment to reduce greenhouse gases by 20 per cent.

The Energy Intensive Users' Group, which represents steel, cement, glass and chemical companies, gave warning yesterday that Britain's electricity costs were already among the highest in Europe.



Spring tonic Gordon Brown's Budget found favour with retailers, but the City was more cautious

### BMW to replace Rovers

BMW confirmed yesterday that it will replace the ageing Rover 200 and 400 range of saloon cars but stopped short of saying that the successor will be built at Longbridge in Birmingham (Adam Jones and Sigrid Auferbeck write).

The future of the car plant will therefore not be known until Stephen Byers, the Trade Secretary, has ruled on BMW's application for government money towards the project.

The sum requested has been estimated at £150 million to £200 million. A decision could come within a fortnight.

Yesterday, Rover said there is a direct contest between Longbridge and Hungary for the replacement work. However, one analyst suggested that BMW was using the Hungarian option as a way of getting money from the UK under the EU regional assistance scheme.

### RJR Nabisco fights Icahn with \$8bn sale

FROM ANDREW BUTCHER  
IN NEW YORK



Goldstone breathing space

RJR NABISCO yesterday acted to thwart an expected boardroom coup by Carl Icahn, a large investor, by selling its international tobacco business for \$8 billion (£5 billion) and splitting its US tobacco and food interests.

Japan Tobacco has bought the foreign rights to sell RJR's brands, such as Camel and Winston, worldwide after a bid battle with the global market leaders Philip Morris and British American Tobacco (BAT). The RJR-Japan Tobacco deal brings together the third and fourth-largest cigarette makers in the world. Japan Tobacco is thought to have paid at least \$1 billion more than others offered.

The sale and the splitting of RJR Nabisco's remaining US cigarette business and its 50.6 per cent controlling stake in the Nabisco biscuit business are seen as giving Steven Gold-

stone, RJR Nabisco's chief executive, breathing space in his board's defence against Mr Icahn. The legendary corporate raider has built a 7.7 per cent stake in RJR and had pressed it to separate its cigarette and biscuit businesses.

He has been denied a board seat and may yet launch a fight for board control this week. Splitting the tobacco and biscuit businesses may face legal

problems, with some experts predicting that RJR will be hit by accusations of "fraudulent conveyancing". Tobacco lawsuit plaintiffs may allege that money that is rightfully theirs has been channelled to shareholders through the spin-off.

With the sale of the international tobacco business, RJR's main business will be Nabisco food products. The company will be renamed Nabisco Holdings Corporation.

The US cigarette arm is plagued by debts arising from health-related lawsuits. Last November RJR joined other tobacco companies in a \$206 billion settlement of lawsuits launched by 46 American states. Most of the cash from the sale to Japan Tobacco will be used to pay debts accumulated by the tobacco business. RJR brands account for 24 per cent of US cigarette sales. Philip Morris brands have almost half the market. BAT is the third-biggest US manufacturer, with 16 per cent of sales.

### Exchange lengthens trading day

BY ROBERT WHYMANT AND JASON NISSE

HUNDREDS of jobs could be under threat in Wales after Sony Corporation, the consumer electronics company, said that it would cut 17,000 jobs — 10 per cent of its worldwide workforce — over the next four years.

Trading in London will officially start at 8am and finish, as now, at 4.30pm, lengthening the trading day by an hour. Frankfurt will trade from 9am to 5.30pm continental time, the same actual time as London.

Frankfurt's trading session will stay the same length as now but will open and close 30 minutes later. No date has been set for the changes, but they are intended to come in later this year.

For London, the change in hours marks a *volute* face. Only nine months ago, the opening was put back from 8.30am to 9am to reduce price distortions in the electronic order system it had introduced for FTSE 100 stocks. Commentary, page 31

The jobs will be eliminated as Sony slims down its global network of 70 manufacturing sites to 55 by the end of March

2003. Sony said that operations in Britain and other parts of Europe, as well as the United States and Asia, including Japan, would all be affected by the job cuts.

The company employs 4,500 people in the UK, though about 2,500 of these are in research and development or in the computer games business, which is almost certain to be unaffected.

The company employs 4,500 at two factories in Pencoed and Bridgend in South Wales. The factories make televisions and video recorders, two product lines that Sony may decide to cut back.

The Tokyo market liked the news. Sony shares surged 7890, or 8.86 per cent, to close at Y10,940, and shares in the three subsidiaries traded on the Tokyo Stock Exchange's Second Section also rose sharply.

### Sony cutbacks jeopardise jobs in South Wales

BY ROBERT WHYMANT AND JASON NISSE

### Deal nears for First Choice

FIRST Choice Holidays revealed yesterday that it is in the final stages of merger talks with Kuoni Reisen, the Swiss travel group, to create a £1.5 billion pan-European travel group listed in London and Zurich (Fraser Nelson writes).

The company, which said six days ago that it was in takeover talks, said a formal deal should be agreed by Monday.

Ian Clubb, First Choice executive chairman, will take the helm of the enlarged company even though Kuoni shareholders will own 53 per cent of it.

The merger would be accomplished by creating a new company, Kuoni plc, which would make an all-share offer for both First Choice and Kuoni Reisen.

The two companies are roughly the same size in market capitalisation and profits. First Choice is valued at £750 million and made £50 million for the 1998 financial year. Kuoni is valued at £778 million and last year made profits of £47.2 million.

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British Midland

# Alliance comes under pressure from institutions

By JASON NISSE

SIR DAVID ALLIANCE, the founder of Coats Viyella and its chairman for the past decade, could face pressure from institutional investors to resign because of the increasing bitter row over the future of the company.

Leading shareholders are understood to be pressing the textiles group to explore a merger with one of its main rivals as a way of restoring the

fortunes of the company, which has lost 80 per cent of its market value over the past five years.

Phillips & Drew Fund Management, which has recently shown an appetite for shareholder activism, is Coats's largest investor with 18.9 per cent. Other leading investors include Brinson Partners, which like P&D is owned by UBS.

Michael Ost, chief executive

of Coats Viyella, yesterday denied that the company was under any pressure to seek out mergers. He said that P&D had not mentioned any imperative to pursue a merger, though it is understood that P&D is seeking meetings with the senior Coats directors.

Possible partners include Courtaulds Textiles, William Baird and Dewhurst, though Mr Ost said that these companies all faced similar problems.

Leading shareholders believe it is Sir David who is the largest barrier to radical change at Coats. "The problems may well be with the chairman," said one leading investor.

Yesterday Coats reported sales in 1998 from continuing operations fall 6 per cent to £2.07 billion, but tight management of cash led to a 7 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £35.5 million. A large advance corporation tax write-off meant tax bill of £56.2 million and there was a loss per share of 3.8p compared with zero earnings in 1997. A final dividend of 1.5p makes a total of 3p for the year (4.7p).

**Sad decline.** page 33

## DC Cook issues profits warning

By MARTIN BARROW

DC COOK, the automotive distributor, yesterday gave warning that first-half pre-tax profits would fall below those reported in first six months of the previous year because of weak demand for new cars.

Although demand had improved with the introduction of the new T registration

plate this would not be sufficient to offset the downturn in the previous months. Cook shares fell 2.1p to 18p. Separately, Ryland announced a £7.48 million recommended takeover bid for fellow car dealer Wyndham Motor Group. The offer is worth 22.15p per Wyndham share, against Monday's closing price of 21.75p.

**Sad decline.** page 33



Taking stock: from left, Brian Patterson of Wedgwood; Ottmar Kusel of Rosenthal; and Redmond O'Donoghue and Richard Barnes of Waterford

## Waterford to cut Potteries jobs

By FRASER NELSON

THERE was further jobs misery in the Potteries yesterday when it was announced 360 jobs have been cut in Waterford Wedgwood's operations in Stoke-on-Trent. More than 260 jobs have gone with the decision to close a figurine and jewellery plant in the city while another 100 jobs are to go at the Wedgwood cer-

amics factory. The job losses are part of company plans to lose a total of 600 jobs.

Richard Barnes, finance director, said the cuts will allow its Stoke operations to compete with overseas rivals. "We've closed two satellite factories because there was ample space in the main factory. This restructuring will make sure Wedgwood is the lower-cost producer for our quality of product."

The shake-up will cost £24.6 million (£21.2 million), but deliver £18 million savings in 1999, with annual ongoing savings of £1.3 million.

Buoyant demand from the US, where Waterford now has a 50 per cent market share of the luxury crystal market, helped group pre-tax profits up 22 per cent to £14.9 million on total sales of £157.5 million up from £147.1 million.

## Midshires reveals its average windfall

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

BIRMINGHAM Midshires, the building society, yesterday announced that about 400,000 of its members will receive a cash windfall averaging £1,250, higher figure than forecast, when it converts to bank status next month.

The society is redistributing £750 million between its one million members as part of its takeover by Halifax, the bank, and will abandon its mutual status on April 19.

The society said a High Court action to stop the deal, promised by Bob Goodall, founder of the Save Our Building Societies pressure group, remained a threat but that it was confident it would convert to a bank on schedule.

To get the £1,250 windfall members have to have been with the society since before December 31, 1995. Those who joined after that date will receive 400 Halifax preference shares, worth about £400.

Members should receive a letter by March 17 detailing how much they stand to receive and what action they need to take. It intends to credit savings accounts or to send a cheque by April 26 and to post share certificates three days later.

BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO

# Resilient performance in difficult trading environment

Preliminary results for the year to 31 December

	1998	1997
OPERATING PROFIT PRE-EXCEPTIONALS	£1,550m	£1,591m
PRE-TAX PROFIT	£738m	£875m
EARNINGS PER SHARE	22.2p	26.6p
ADJUSTED EARNINGS PER SHARE	46.1p	49.1p
DIVIDENDS PER SHARE	24.0p	

- Operating profit, at £1,550 million, was 1 per cent higher in local currency before US tobacco settlements costs and a sales tax recovery in Brazil.
- The decline in pre-tax profit and earnings per share was principally due to the initial costs of the US tobacco settlements of £613 million (1997: £258 million).
- Against a global cigarette market which is estimated to have declined, Group volumes for the year were slightly ahead with the growth rate moderated by reduced volumes in the US and Asia-Pacific. There were good performances in Latin America, Europe, Amesca and Canada.
- The Board is recommending a final dividend of 16p, which will be paid on 1 July. At the time the proposed merger with Rothmans was announced, a special interim dividend of 4p for 1999 was also declared, which will be paid on the same date.
- "The focus of our attention in 1999 will be on managing the business in line with our long term strategy in a difficult trading environment. We will also be ensuring that the integration of the Rothmans business, once the necessary shareholder and regulatory approvals have been received, goes as smoothly as possible."

Martin Broughton, Chairman

Full financial statements for the year ended 31/12/98 will be delivered to the Registrar of Companies and carry an unqualified audit report. The 1998 Annual Report is being posted to shareholders at the end of March. Copies of the preliminary announcement may be obtained from the Company Secretary, British American Tobacco plc, Globe House, 4 Temple Place, London WC2R 2PC.

## EXCHANGE RATES

Bank Buy	Bank Sell	Bank Buy	Bank Sell
Australia \$ 2.63	2.46	Israel Shek. 3041	3204
Austria Sch. 21.36	19.70	Ireland 100.74	100.21
Belgium Fr. 62.85	57.93	Malta 0.74	0.72
Canada \$ 1.20	1.16	Netherlands Gld. 3.452	3.157
Cyprus Cyp. £ 0.9009	0.8256	New Zealand \$ 3.16	2.92
Denmark Kr. 11.86	10.70	Norway Kr. 11.26	11.22
Egypt £ 5.71	5.10	Portugal Esc. 300.44	297.62
Finland Nkr. 6.56	5.87	S Africa Rand 10.58	9.62
France Fr. 10.18	9.40	Spain Pta. 257.74	238.95
Germany Dm. 3.058	2.516	Sweden Kr. 14.02	12.69
Greece Dr. 802	463	Switzerland Fr. 2.61	2.50
Hong Kong S. 18.39	12.13	USA \$ 598.760	570.000
Iceland Kr. 12.20	11.20	Yemen R. 1.72	1.577
Indonesia Rup. 18.001	13.001	Russia Rub. 1.0000	supplied by Barclays Bank
Ireland P. 1.2200	1.1310		

In a Brown budget, what you hear is not quite what you get. Parents who heard that their married couple's allowance would be replaced with a new family tax cut rejoiced, unaware of the one-year time lag between the first going and the second arriving.

Small firms who heard that there was to be a new 10p in the pound tax rate benefiting every company making profits up to £50,000 would have had no reason to suspect that, actually, the 10p rate will only apply to the first £10,000.

The details reveal that Mr Brown was not quite so generous as he managed to appear. He is handing back just £1 billion in the next tax year but his promises mount up and, as they come into effect, the cost will run to more than £3.5 billion.

He is lucky enough to have sufficient funds in the kitty to afford that degree of largesse but, unless the economy picks up fairly rapidly, he may find himself more constrained when drawing up his next Budget, just when the pre-election mood is encouraging him to be generous.

The surprises he is predicting show a delightfully reassuring steady upward progression but corporate profits are not following the same graph. Despite Mr Brown's enthusiasm for encouraging enterprise, yesterday's Budget cannot negate the difficulties that British industry faces in selling to

a global market when at least a quarter of the world is in recession and much of the rest is on the edge of that unhappy state.

Burdening companies with the Working Time Directive and the minimum wage is no way to increase their productivity. But those measures played no part in Mr Brown's upbeat message yesterday. It was tone as much as substance that led the City to give it an immediately positive response, with retailers in particular seeing a resurgence of consumer confidence ahead.

Perhaps they had not been paying attention as Mr Brown had talked of the plans to toughen up the Office of Fair Trading. He has talked of his crusade against high prices before. Now he proposes to give the Office of Fair Trading more cash to go out and fight, creating in the process a new criminal offence of refusing to give the OFT inspectors the information they might request.

The men from the OFT will now be promoted to the level of VAT inspectors in the business world's unpopularity stakes. There could also be some unwelcome spying on the financial serv-

ices industry as a result of the demands that banks and building societies spell out their real charges for mortgages.

But there is good news in Mr Brown's decision not to press ahead, for the moment at least, with plans for a general tax avoidance provision. Such catch-all laws are always dangerous. A fair tax system is more effective and lower taxes, even by the odd penny, are a step towards that.

#### Just what we need: another agency

**M**r Brown is relying on small firms to provide the engine of growth in the next century. The serial entrepreneur is to be the hero of the age, encouraged with tax breaks, although it seems that, in this definition, the serial has only two episodes: relief will only roll out un-

## What you hear is not what you get

### COMMENTARY by our City Editor

moves to further limit what parents may pass on to their children. For many entrepreneurs, the urge to create something for the next generation is a crucial part of their psyche.

If employees have not taken the hint by now, perhaps it is because, carry householders have worked out for themselves that you should not put all your financial eggs in one basket: job, pension, savings.

Mr Brown's scheme would enable shares to be bought out of pre-tax income, but the tax is only deferred. No problem, if the shares produce tax-free gains. Not so good if there is tax to pay when your shares have tumbled and you have lost your job.

That fate is not confined to dodgy companies. Ask shareholders in half a dozen of our biggest, most respectable food groups.

own companies to build identification with the company's goals. Most date from the Thatcher era.

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#### Early warning

GLOBAL trading should mean longer hours in markets with ambition. The London Stock Exchange lost face last June when it pushed back the morning start to cope with the limitations of its US-style Settled Blue Chip trading system. To match its German allies, who are used to getting their towels out early, London is now to lengthen its day by a full hour, a rare fruit of European harmonisation. Customers, rather than insiders, are coming first. But both exchanges had better beware of the Working Time Directive.

## Asia Pacific losses hit BAT's value

BY PAUL ARMSTRONG

INVESTORS fled the tobacco sector yesterday amid poor results from British American Tobacco and the latest rise in excise duty on cigarettes in the Budget.

BAT's valuation was cut by £27 million after the company reported that its operations in Asia-Pacific had made a £21 million loss in the quarter to December 31 and that conditions remained tough.

About £10 million was wiped off the value of Gallaher and Imperial Tobacco's value was cut by £30 million after the increase in tobacco excise of inflation plus 5 per cent.

Tobacco companies blame the UK's high excise rates for the sharp rise in the cheaper, illegal cigarette imports that have been taking market share from legitimate suppliers.

BAT reported a 16 per cent slump in pre-tax profit £738 million for 1998. The result was hit by a £63 million exceptional charge relating to the settlement of legal action in the US. Operating profit before exceptions slipped 3 per cent to £1.55 billion, reflecting weak trading conditions in Asia and Brazil and the outbreak of a price war in the US.

A final dividend of 16p was declared, taking the full-year payout to 24p. A special

interim dividend of 4p will also be paid in July.

BAT estimated that the cigarette market worldwide had fallen by about 0.3 per cent last year, ending a long trend of annual growth of between zero and 1 per cent.

Michael Prdeaux, director of corporate affairs, said it was too difficult to forecast when there would be a turnaround in the company's Asian markets.

Mr Prdeaux said that there had been an erosion of the price increases recorded in the US market last year as the leading cigarette makers scrambled for market share.

But he hoped that the need to fund the US settlement would result in some of the losses being regained.

Mr Prdeaux also played down the prospect of more health-related compensation payouts, saying the position was "much, much better" than last year. He said the tobacco industry had drawn comfort from several recent court rulings that had fallen in its favour.

BAT expects to know by the end of this month whether European regulators will launch a full-scale inquiry into the company's proposed merger with Rothmans International.

Tempus, page 32

## Zurich to raise cost of revamp by \$1bn

BY CAROLINE MERRELL

ZURICH Financial Services, formed from the merger between Zurich Insurance and BAT's financial services business, has increased its restructuring charges by \$1 billion (£625 million) to \$2.4 billion.

The majority of this increase in restructuring cost relates to Eagle Star, originally part of BAT. About \$200 million of the extra charge will cover the expense of closing offices and paying redundancy costs.

A Zurich spokeswoman refused to comment on the number of job losses, but said: "Most of the extra charge relates to the UK."

A further \$800 million of the restructuring costs will be used to strengthen reserves in the non-life fund of Eagle Star. The spokeswoman said that the company had made the changes to Eagle Star to bring the reserves in the fund in line with Zurich's general insurance fund.

Zurich said that the annual cost savings from the merger are expected to increase from \$400 million to \$500 million by 2001.

Rolf Hueppi, Zurich chief executive officer, said: "The initial strategic logic for the merger has been reconfirmed. We continue aggressively to exploit the opportunities offered by this merger."

## Rhodia confirmation

BY PAUL DURMAN

RHODIA, the French chemicals company, has confirmed that it is considering an offer for Albright & Wilson, the British phosphates producer that earlier this week recommended a £408 million offer from Albemarle Corporation of the US.

The announcement pushed Albright's shares 88p higher to 138p, preventing Albemarle adding to its 18.6

per cent stake it acquired on Monday at its offer price of 130p a share.

Rhodia, which is 68 per cent owned by Rhône-Poulenc, which is advised by NM Rothschild and Warburg Dillon Read, is thought to be concerned about the strong position that Albemarle has already secured. The company may also face difficulties financing a higher offer: its shares have performed badly and it already has substantial borrowings.

## Thornton resignation

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

JOHN THORNTON has stepped down as chairman of Laura Ashley, the struggling retailer, blaming his heavy commitments at Goldman Sachs, the American bank of which he is now co-chief operating officer.

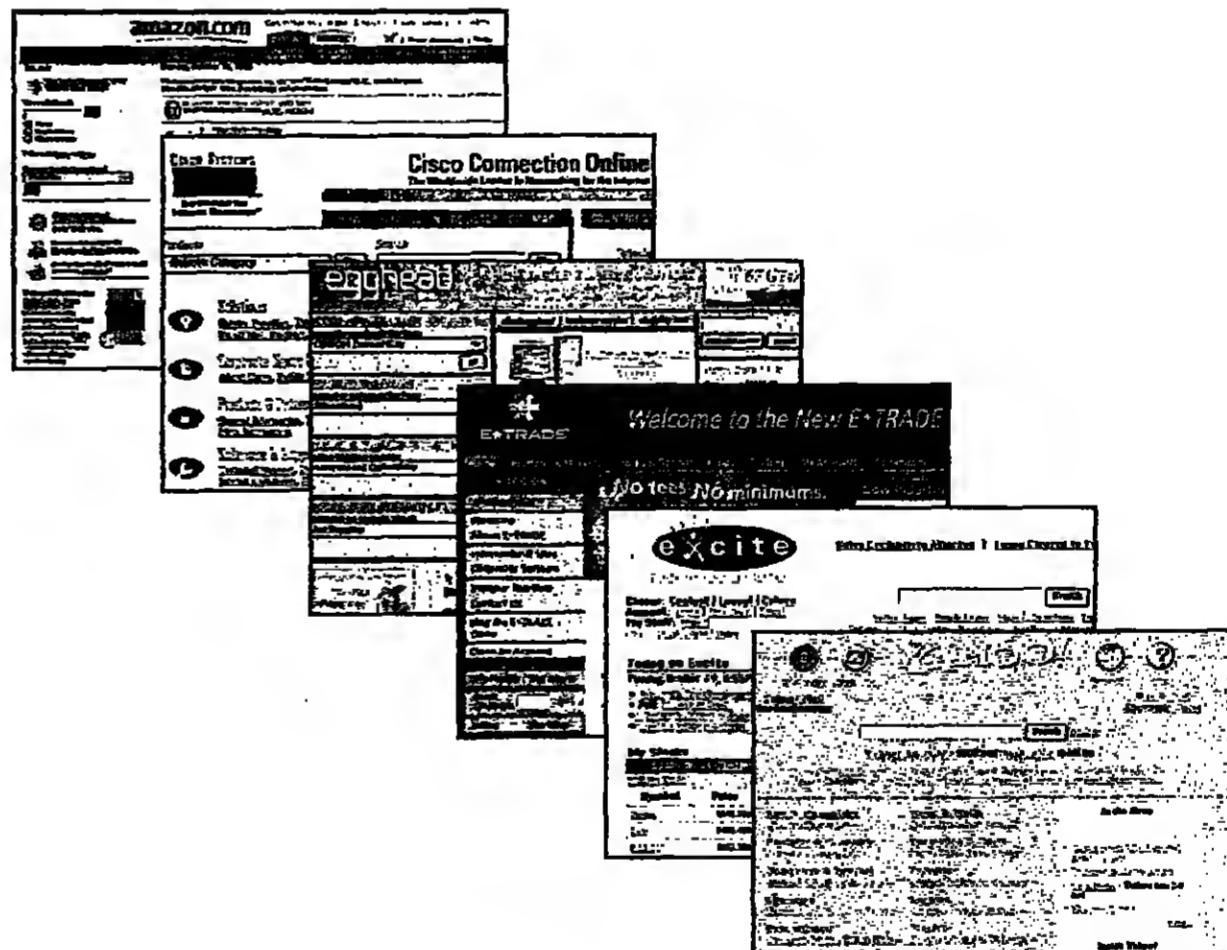
Mr Thornton is being replaced by Tan Sri Dr Kay Peng Kho, chairman and chief executive of Malayan United Industries, the largest single share-

holder in Laura Ashley. Dr Kho is currently a non-executive director.

David Walton Masters, a non-executive director, is to be non-executive deputy chairman. He is managing director of Kerr Investment Management in Hong Kong, but is returning to the UK to be executive deputy chairman of Regal Hotel Group.

Kwan Cheong Ng, a Malaysian, was made Laura Ashley's chief executive earlier this year.

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With effect from 9 March 1999

	Previous Gross %	AER %
Private Banking Current Account (1)		
Up to £2,000	0.50	0.50
£2,000+	1.00	1.00
£10,000+	2.23	1.74
£50,000+	2.96	2.48
Private Banking Savings Account (1)		
(monthly interest option)		
Up to £10,000	4.89	4.41
£10,000+	5.09	4.61
£50,000+	5.18	4.70
£100,000+	5.47	4.99
Private Banking Savings Account (1)		
(annual interest option)		
Up to £10,000	5.00	4.50
£10,000+	5.20	4.70
£50,000+	5.30	4.80
£100,000+	5.60	5.10
Investment Management		
Cash held on the Capital Account within our Investment Management Service will earn interest at the following rates:		
Up to £5,000	1.00	1.00
£5,000+	4.91	4.43
£10,000+	5.11	4.62
£50,000+	5.20	4.72
£100,000+	5.49	5.01

Given the rate before the deduction of tax applied to interest on savings. AER (Annual Equivalent Rate): A nominal rate which illustrates what the gross rate would be if interest was paid and compounded each year. All rates are quoted per annum.

(1) This product is no longer available to new customers.  
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## STOCK MARKET



MICHAEL CLARK

# FTSE takes lead from Wall Street confidence

WALL STREET'S advance on the 10,000 level seemed to hold more appeal for City investors than any of the proposals emanating from Gordon Brown.

While the London equity market gave cautious approval to Gordon Brown's Budget package and closed with modest gains on the day, traders emphasised that much of the rise was attributable to the influence of New York, where opening rises were recorded.

The FTSE 100 index ended the session 29.9 up at 6,237.7 with the FTSE All-share index adding 12.34 to 2,861.13 in conditions that saw a total of 995 million shares change hands.

But not everyone emerged from the Budget in good shape. The demand for increased competition among the water utilities and airports operators left them nursing sharp falls. BAA Group, the airport operator, fell 10.1p to 6,650p.

Among the water companies Anglian shed 20p to 70p; Pennon Group 21.1p to £10.01; Severn Trent 37p to 88.2p; Thames Water 47p to 98.8p; United Utilities 33p to 78.4p; and Yorkshire Water 20p to 44.7p.

The power generators were also under a cloud, reflecting the Government's aims of introducing a business energy levy and its determination to combat the greenhouse effect. Brokers say it could add substantially to their cost base.

PowerGen fell 14p to 734.5p; Scottish Power 20.1p to 54.5p; and Scottish & Southern Energy 16p to 33.5p.

British American Tobacco finished 15p down at 557.1p on the back of yesterday's lower profits and Mr Brown's 17.1p rise in a packet of cigarettes.

Gallaher ended 15.1p lower at 44.1p despite Charrerhouse Securities, the broker, raising its recommendation for the shares from "hold" to "accumulate". Imperial Tobacco was 4p off at 718.1p.

Drinks companies were given plenty to cheer by the Chancellor's decision to freeze duty on beer and spirits. Brokers say share prices should reflect the good news when trading resumes this morning. Last night Bass rose 13.1p to 900.1p; Scottish & Newcastle 7p to 705.1p; Joseph Holt 22.1p to 614.71p; and Highland Distillers 1p to 24.5p, while Allied Domecq finished 4.1p cheaper at 487.1p, and Diageo 9.1p at 724.1p.



Paul Walker, left, and Michael Jackson, Sage chairman, saw the shares 67.1p as another director cut his holding

The Chancellor's proposal of "computers for all" helped selective technology stocks and suppliers. RM put on 10p to 63.5p; Logica 14p to 68.9p; and Capita Group 25p to 78.1p.

The quarterly reshuffle of the constituents of the top 100 companies takes place later today. It will see two automatic new entries in South African Breweries, up 22.1p to 207.1p.

Among those almost certain to go are Tamkins, 3.1p easier at 206.1p, and Williams, up 4.1p to 364.1p. They are likely to be joined by Safeway, 7p off at

and Energis, down 42.1p at £15.55, after National Grid's move to reduce its holding below 50 per cent. They are likely to be joined by Emap, 25p better at £14.15, and Misys, 5p firmer at 64.5p.

Independent Insurance rose 30.1p to 280p on the back of final results. Michael Bright, director, has acquired 190,000 shares at 262.5p and now speaks for 14 million, or 5.8 per cent, while his colleague, Philip Condon, has bought 38,000 shares at 262.4p, raising his holding to 3.45 million, or 1.45 per cent.

Sage Group, whose chief executive is Paul Walker, advanced 67.1p to 20.80 as Graham Wyllie, technical director, unloaded 414,943 shares at £20. It reduces his beneficial holding in the IT specialist to 7.97 million shares.

Bargain-hunters came back for engineering and industrial companies. Rises were seen in Seapa, 7.1p to 108p; Glynned International, 9.1p to 206p; Morgan Crucible, 10p to 231.1p; Semco Engineering, 6p to 14.1p; and Delta, 7p to 132p.

Shares of Epicore Networks were suspended at 12p. The company will de-list its shares from AIM after undergoing a transformation in its activities.

There was little joy for Corporate Services in the wake of this week's shock profits warning with the price ending another 25p lower at 88.1p.

**□ GIILT-EDGEDED:** The bond market gave a frosty reception to the Government's funding proposals. Prices fell sharply in late trading along with the future and short sterling. There are worries that the bond market will be required to fund the proposed £4 billion of tax cuts, resulting in a welter of new bond issues.

In the futures pit the June series of the long gilt lost an early lead to close 69p lower at £115.68, while the September short sterling fell 11p to £94.76.

**□ NEW YORK:** Shares were higher after computer buy programs helped to boost the financial and technology sectors. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was up 58.55 at 9,786.16.



MANY false dawns have been experienced by investors monitoring the property sector.

In its latest review of the sector Sutherland, the broker, says confidence is returning and the share prices of the better performers are starting to recover. But it admits there is a lot of lost ground to be made up.

That said, companies with a December year end have been reporting better than expected results, which is seen as positive. Those companies that

Sutherlands has singled out for attention include Capital Shopping, steady at 384p. Despite retailers generally experiencing a difficult time, the group's focus on regional shopping malls is paying dividends.

Estates & General unchanged at 78p, is also on the "buy" list after achieving strong profits growth.

However, there was no such support for Chesterfield Properties, down 8p at 405p, after Commerzbank cut its rating for the shares from "hold" to "sell".

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## COMMODITIES

COFFEE		Cocoa		SUGAR (FOB)	
Mar -	1715-1717	Nov -	1565-1567	Mar -	190-191
Apr -	1895-1900	Dec -	1650-1651	May -	190-191
May -	190-191	Jun -	1650-1651	Jun -	190-191
Jun -	190-191	Jul -	1650-1651	Jul -	190-191
Jul -	190-191	Aug -	1650-1651	Aug -	190-191
Aug -	190-191	Sep -	1650-1651	Sep -	190-191
Sep -	190-191	Oct -	1650-1651	Oct -	190-191
Oct -	190-191	Nov -	1650-1651	Nov -	190-191
Nov -	190-191	Dec -	1650-1651	Dec -	190-191
Dec -	190-191	Jan -	1650-1651	Jan -	190-191
Jan -	190-191	Feb -	1650-1651	Feb -	190-191
Feb -	190-191	Mar -	1650-1651	Mar -	190-191
Mar -	190-191	Apr -	1650-1651	Apr -	190-191
Apr -	190-191	May -	1650-1651	May -	190-191
May -	190-191	Jun -	1650-1651	Jun -	190-191
Jun -	190-191	Jul -	1650-1651	Jul -	190-191
Jul -	190-191	Aug -	1650-1651	Aug -	190-191
Aug -	190-191	Sep -	1650-1651	Sep -	190-191
Sep -	190-191	Oct -	1650-1651	Oct -	190-191
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Jul -	190-191	Aug -	1650-1651	Aug -	190-191
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May -	190-191	Jun -	1650-1651	Jun -	190-191
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Nov -	190-191	Dec -	1650-1651	Dec -	190-191
Dec -	190-191	Jan -	1650-1651	Jan -	190-191
Jan -	190-191	Feb -	1650-1651	Feb -	190-191
Feb -	190-191	Mar -	1650-1651	Mar -	190-191
Mar -	190-191	Apr -	1650-1651	Apr -	190-191
Apr -	190-191	May -	1650-1651	May -	190-191
May -	190-191	Jun -	1650-1651	Jun -	190-191
Jun -	190-191	Jul -	1650-1651		

# Eat, drink and be merry — then face the tribunal's wrath

**Alcohol and other drugs are posing legal risks for firms, cautions Paul Armstrong**

**C**ity firms may feel more inclined than usual to open the drinks cabinet this Friday night to thank those hard workers who have spent late nights combing through the Budget papers. A drink on the house does, after all, go a long way to fostering the sort of workplace morale that occupies endless chapters in the management textbooks.

But the wisdom provided by these modern-day Dale Carnegie often overlooks the horrendous legal implications associated with breaking open the bubbly. In fact, many employers are probably more familiar with the French ban on others using champagne as the name for the celebratory tip than they are with the legal hazards of financing its purchase.

Put simply, if an employer pays for his employee to have a drink, it might find itself between a rock and a hard place if the employee misbehaves when he has had a few shandies.

Alcohol and a growing range of other drugs are posing increasing legal risks for employers who are caught between the offender's entitlements, the company's obligations to the safety of other employees and performance targets.

Figures provided by the Trades Union Congress show that drink and drug misuse costs employers about £3 million a year, two-thirds of which is alcohol-related.

But both employer groups and the unions say that, despite the increasing complexity of the issue, there is no push to follow America down the path of random drug testing. This is thought to be partly because employers are failing to recognise the symptoms of many modern-day drugs as well as a reluctance to take responsibility for the administration and legal implications of testing programmes.

The TUC argues that there is insufficient evidence to show that screening programmes are effective and emphasises that they are no replacement for a sensitive approach by employers to workers with drug problems. Employees should not be punished for their problems, it says.

Lawyers specialising in this field are sounding a warning that dismissing, or even disciplining, those under the influence of drugs at work has become a minefield riddled with potentially expensive and embarrassing consequences for employers who fail to follow the handbook to the letter.

But offending employees should draw little comfort from the system. Dismissal can still be the final result of alcohol and drug abuse at work, it is just that the process is more tortuous



Tribunals will probably be unsympathetic if an employer has paid for the drink, even if it is a bottle of wine bought at an expense account lunch

and, in some cases, more public.

Trish Embley, a partner at Eversheds, the law firm, says that the key for employers lies in determining whether the drug use constitutes assault or misconduct. The wrong choice here leaves the employer heavily exposed to being sued in an employment tribunal.

Ms Embley, who will take part in an Eversheds convention on this and other human resource issues later this month, says one-off binges by workers with no history of serious alcoholism or depression are clear cases of misconduct.

But she cautions that tribunals will be very unsympathetic if the employer has paid for the drink — be it opening the drinks cabinet for a celebrator, or even paying for the bottle of wine bought at an expense account lunch.

Employers have to be very careful about mitigating circumstances, she says. "If the employee agrees he harassed somebody but says he was totally out of his mind, it may be considered too harsh to dismiss them, rather than issue a warning, if the employer provided the drink."

Coming to work drunk or

returning from the public bar an hour late are also obvious cases of misconduct.

But, for employers, the disciplinary process becomes far more complex once that determination is made. They then have to pass two tests before action can be taken, with the first being to prove to a tribunal that the employee knows he or she is not allowed to be drunk at work.

This is not as simple as it sounds. The employer has to

that there is no special mitigating circumstances then the employer can go ahead and sack them," Ms Embley says.

"But even if the employer passed these tests the tribunal would slate them if they had provided the drink. They would have very little chance of success."

"Everyone likes to have parties but the fact is that for employers, it is a case of handle with care. They need to remember that they are

against employee claims by investigating if the drug use monitored," he says.

"We are moving into the provision of counselling and stress treatment because these are often associated with drugs."

Employers who are already thinking of ways to explain the cancellation of this year's Christmas party will almost certainly surrender to their instincts at the prospect of combined alcohol and harassment case.

The law says an employer can be held liable for harassment at a work function. Employer groups say this sometimes leads to victims demanding that

against employee claims by investigating if the drug use monitored," he says. "We are moving into the provision of counselling and stress treatment because these are often associated with drugs."

Employers who are already thinking of ways to explain the cancellation of this year's Christmas party will almost certainly surrender to their instincts at the prospect of combined alcohol and harassment case.

This can be resolved by asking the employee to undergo a medical examination. Refusal to comply can justify dismissal, particularly if the employer has offered counselling to help to treat the problem.

If it is established that

there is a drinking or drug problem then the employer needs to proceed much more carefully and treat the whole situation with sympathy," Ms Embley advises.

"But even in these cases there is a time when the employer is entitled to say 'enough is enough'."

The laws regarding drink and drugs at work also contradict the widely held belief that those in supervisory and management roles have more room in which to play.

In front of a tribunal, they are likely to learn that the reverse is the case. The watchdog usually adopts the view that those in superior positions are supposed to set an example, increasing the chances of any dismissal being approved.

After digesting this "checklist", employers could be excused for wanting a drink. Or, at least, thinking about one.

# Sad decline of Britain's once great textile giant

**Jason Nissé examines the rise and fall of Coats Viyella**

**W**hat ever happened to Coats Viyella? Less than a decade ago, when it was jousting with Tootal before actually buying its rival thread company, Coats was the 40th-largest company on the London stock market.

Earlier this year its market value fell below £200 million, valuing Coats at less than the price obtained when it sold off its Dynacast engineering business, and the company is currently valued at little more than the accumulated value of the group's pension fund surplus.

The business is the creation of Sir David Alliance, the Iranian émigré who arrived in Manchester with barely two bobbins to rub together and created what was once the greatest textile company in Britain. He brought together Coats Patons, Vanonia Viyella, Nottingham Manufacturing and Tootal, built state-of-the-art factories in Northern Ireland when no one else but John Delorean would invest in the six counties.

He was loved by his employees,

who told stories about him inspecting the ladies' toilets to make sure they were clean and remembering the birthdays of warehousemen.

He was brilliant at identifying assets that were

surplus to requirement and

selling them for more than

their apparent market value.

Now there is pressure upon

Coats to do something to revive

itself, such as a merger with Courtaulds Textiles or William Baird.

However, within Coats

there may be a weariness when

these suggestions are voiced, as

radical solutions.

Some of the ideas bounced

around the Coats boardroom in the past three or four years have included:

□ selling off the company's retail operations — largely Jaeger — which are now under the control of former Sears director, Rebecca Cottrell. This depends on finding a buyer, though Austin Reed has been mentioned, and a poor performance last year did not help;

□ selling off the home furnishing side, which operates both as a retailer and supplier to Marks & Spencer;

□ merging the clothing operations with a rival. William Baird has been mentioned, though Coats

people think De

whist might have been a better fit. This is because the key to this operation thriving is for

production largely to be moved overseas and Dcwhurst has experience in this area.

The situation is certainly not helped by a combination of a strong pound and weak markets in the Far East — a situation recently described by Jim McAdam, as a "nutcracker".

It is also not helped by the uncertainty within M&S, Coats' largest customer. And it is finally not helped by differences between Sir David and Mr Ost, who is less optimistic about the prospects for textiles than his chairman. Institutional investors have muddled,

darkly, that if Sir David proves a barrier to his problems, he might have to be removed.

It is a dramatic suggestion.

But these are troubled times for what used to be a giant of British industry.

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## Poll position

RUMBLINGS among some members of the Institute of Directors at the feared imposition of a career politician, and a committed europhobe, as director-general once Tim Melville-Ross goes in the summer. Their fears seem exaggerated — internal soundings suggest that the IoD is aware of how unpopular such a move might be — but I hear about five local chairmen are considering an open letter on the point.

John Redwood, seen as a commit-



### On side

AS WEMBLEY shareholders gather tomorrow to vote on the company's much-disputed plan to sell Wembley Stadium, I bear that the "vote of no confidence" in Clae Hultman, their chairman, at the weekend was a bit of a foregone conclusion.

In the event, the three rebel directors, Roger Brooke, Peter Mead and Jarvis Aspinall, voted against Hultman. This left the six-strong board split, and the casting vote went to . . . the chairman, Clae Hultman.

We have found that it is better to walk before we run in this area, and either spend or recommend that you spend thousands of pounds (euros?). Two alternate suggestions . . .

IT HAS been taken to task by the Advertising Standards Authority over that rash of adverts saying things like "Staines to Sidcup for 1p", referring to the low cost of making a phone call between those two places. The ASA was less impressed by the small wording at the bottom left hand corner of the poster that says "Minimum charge 5p".

### Pop picker

A SURVEY by MORI suggests that Tony Blair and William Hague are less trusted as pensions providers than, for some bizarre reason, Sir Cliff Richard. Something called i-group (sic), a financial services business, commissioned the research, and the ageless one came in second only to Howard Davies, head of the Financial Services Authority.

Politicians did really badly. I am glad to say, Alastair Darling, Social Security Secretary, whose job is pensions reform, polled only a handful of votes. His shadow, Iain Duncan-Smith, did even worse, a de with Vanessa Feltz, no less. And the prince of darkness, Peter Mandelson, was ranked equal with Robert Maxwell.

I KNOW nothing of Ron Suckling and his airline, Suckling Airways, but we can all be encouraged by the news that he will be operating out of London City airport to Dundee four times a day. They do say pigs will fly.



Lady Denton had no qualms about being sent to Northern Ireland

Alasdair Murray examines the Chancellor's Red Book forecasts

# Brown's optimistic vision of Britain

THE CHANCELLOR yesterday presented an optimistic vision of the British economy, insisting that it had weathered the storms of last autumn and is on course to return to healthy growth next year.

In the Budget Red Book, Gordon Brown persevered with growth targets, which were last revised in November, despite a growing consensus in the City that GDP growth is only likely to total about half the level anticipated by the Treasury during the coming year.

City analysts were also surprised that Mr Brown appears

to have slightly loosened his tight grip on the public finances, with the public sector net cash requirement (PSNCR) now forecast to rise sharply next year, although the Chancellor will remain on course to meet his own borrowing guidelines.

Economists also said that with the Budget apparently boosting consumer spending power, the Bank of England might shy away from further interest rate cuts. However, the fact that Mr Brown has taken action to improve consumer sentiment may help to en-

sure the economy achieves a soft landing.

Mr Brown stuck rigidly to the forecasts he produced in November, despite recent evidence of a rapid downturn in the economy and the fact that even the Bank of England has reduced its forecast of economic growth to 0.75 per cent this year.

The Treasury is forecasting that growth will total between 1 and 1.5 per cent this year, in line with its November forecast, before reaching 2.25 per cent to 2.75 per cent in 2000. In contrast, the City consensus is

that growth is likely to total just 0.6 per cent this year.

The Treasury, however, appears to have taken on board the full extent of the downturn in the manufacturing sector with the Red Book now forecasting this sector will contract by between 1 and 1.5 per cent during the year, compared with a previous forecast of zero growth. The downgrading is also reflected in the forecasts for the balance of payments deficit that is now expected to balloon to £10 billion this year in contrast to the November estimate of £7.5 billion.

However, the Treasury's forecasts for domestic demand and in particular household and general Government consumption have been upgraded, ensuring the Chancellor can stick to his original belief that growth will reach between 1 and 1.5 per cent this year.

While many economists continued to express scepticism that Mr Brown will meet his optimistic forecasts for this year, Neil Parker, economist at the Royal Bank of Scotland, claimed that there is growing evidence the Chancellor may be proved correct.

"I think given the scale of interest rate cuts we've had in the past five or six months, I don't think they're out of range," Mr Parker said.

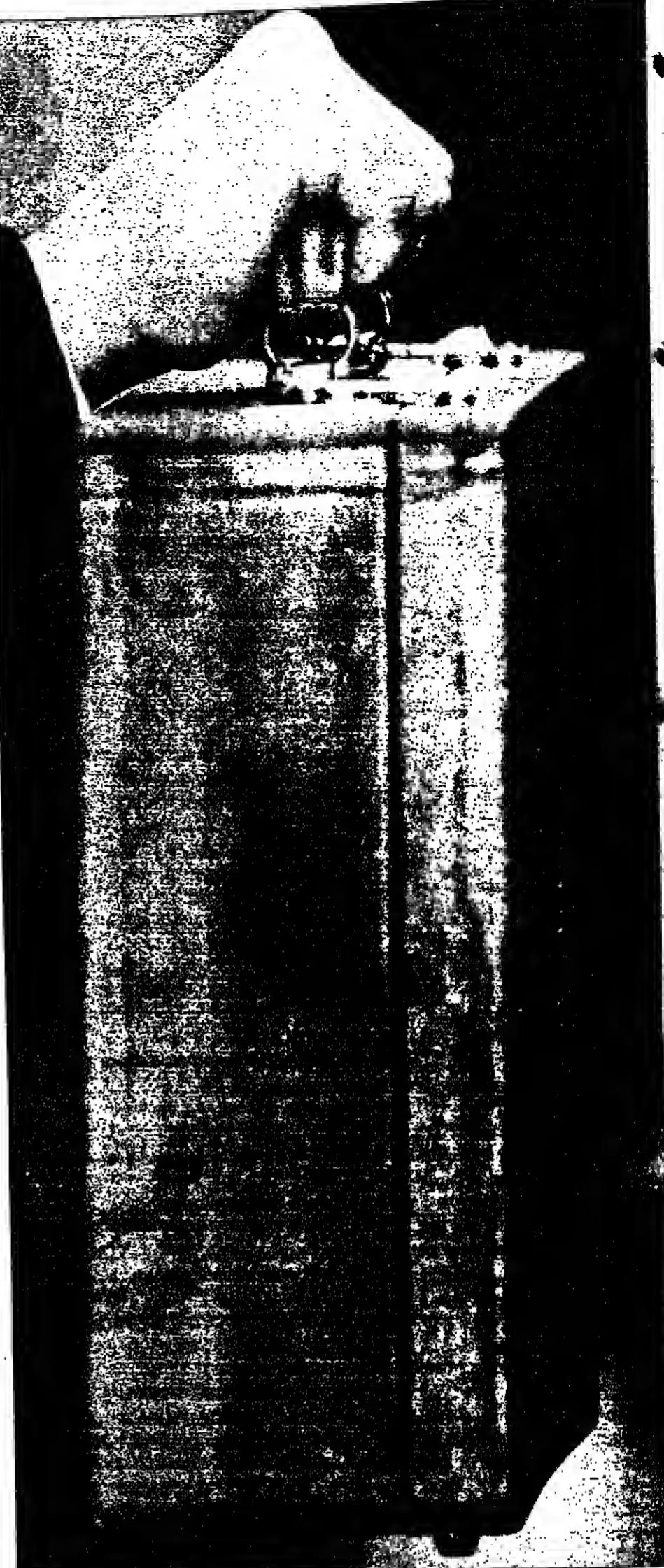
The City broadly gave support to the Red Book forecasts for public sector borrowing, which are now estimating an improved surplus of £5.2 billion this year, compared with a November estimate of £4.3 billion. In an unexpected move, however, the Chancellor has increased his forecasts for the PSNCR deficit next year from £2 billion to £4.5 billion, which suggests some loosening of fiscal policy.

The Treasury played down the impact of the rise, insisting that with the current budget remaining in surplus over the next few years, overall net borrowing will comfortably meet the Chancellor's borrowing guidelines. Analysts, however, said that the plans were still reliant on the Chancellor meeting his growth forecasts.

Gerard Lyons, UK economist at DKB International, said: "The risk is if the economy turns out to be weaker than the Chancellor expects. If that happens, it would undermine his Budget strategy."

Analysts are especially concerned that the majority of the extra money for tax cuts has been found by a reduction in the estimates of social security payments over the next three years. The Treasury is now predicting that public spending will be £1.8 billion lower than previously anticipated, although £9 billion of this is already offset against a lower forecast of tax revenues. About £4 billion of this extra money derives from a decline in debt interest payments as the public finances continue to improve, while £9 billion results from a reduction in the Treasury's contingency funds for rising unemployment.

The Treasury has recently moved from a policy of predicting a stable rate of unemployment to using a consensus of forecasts produced by independent analysts to judge the future course of the labour market. With recent forecasts predicting a less marked rise in unemployment, the Government has been able to reallocate the funds.



Out of the red: Gordon Brown said the current surplus this year is forecast to be £4 billion

SUMMARY OF THE ECONOMIC FORECAST						
	RECENT PREDICTION			2001		
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
GDP growth (per cent)	2.25	1.0-1.50	2.25-2.75	2.75-3.25		
RPIX inflation (per cent)	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50		

CURRENT AND CAPITAL BUDGETS							
	ESTIMATION						
	Outturn 1997-98	Estimate 1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Projections 2002-03	2003-04
<b>CURRENT BUDGET</b>							
Current receipts	315.7	334.2	345	364	385	405	425
Current expenditure	304.3	313.5	329	346	362	379	398
Depreciation	14.0	14.6	15	15	16	16	17
Surplus on current budget (including windfall tax)	-2.6	6.2	1	3	7	9	11
<b>CAPITAL BUDGET</b>							
Gross investment	22.0	21.7	24	26	29	32	35
Less asset sales	-4.0	-3.8	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4
Less depreciation	-14.0	-14.6	-15	-15	-16	-16	-17
Net Investment	4.0	3.4	5	7	10	12	15
Net borrowing (including windfall tax)	6.6	-2.8	4	5	2	3	4
PUBLIC SECTOR NET CASH REQUIREMENT	-5.2	4.5					

\*Excluding windfall tax receipts and associated spending

Source: Standard & Poor's Legal & General PEP All-Share Index-Tracking PEP on an after-tax basis based on all PEP shares with gross income remitted from 01/11/95 until January 1999. Past performance is not a guide to future performance. Past performance does not guarantee future results. The latest available annualised rate of return is 18.4% and standard deviation is 18.4%. Annualised PEPs will only be able to be estimated by PEPs at a reduced rate of 10%. Both capital and income values may go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. Full annual breakdown available on request. Total assets under management as at 31/12/98 was £14.5 billion. The maximum charge for a PEP is 1.5% per annum. Commissions have announced that contributions can only be made to PEPs until April 1999. From that date a new tax-privileged savings vehicle, the Individual Savings Account will be available. Issued by Legal & General Investors Limited, a member of the Legal & General Group. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority. Registered Office: Temple Court, 11 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4TP. Representative office of the legal & general insurance group, members of which are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and PRA for the purposes of recommendation, advising on and selling life assurance and investment products. Leading retail & General Life

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Canab in D plan to undertake fresh trials

Chasley L placed in of recei

forecasts  
British

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999

BUSINESS NEWS 35

## Independent Insurance bucks trend with 22% rise

By MARIANNE CURPHY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

SHARES in Independent Insurance recovered by more than 5 per cent yesterday after the company bucked the trend in the insurance market by reporting a 22-per cent increase in underwriting profit.

The shares, which fell sharply last year after the company spoke of difficult trading, rose 4p to 263.4p. They peaked at 390p in June 1998.

The increase in underwriting profit to £26.2 million (1997: £21.4 million) was achieved despite adverse trends in the insurance market. Yesterday Michael Bright, chief executive said: "Most participants in the UK insurance market will view 1998 as one of the worst in their memory."

The insurance industry as a whole has been affected by high weather claims and increased price competition and as a result some insurers have seen general insurance profits halved.

Describing 1998 as one of the worst years insurers had seen, Mr Bright unveiled a 5 per cent rise in trading profit to £55.2 million (1997: £52.4 million) and a pre-tax profit of £91.6 million (1997: £82.6 million). This was despite a decline in gross written premiums. Independent said it had withdrawn from business

Tempus, page 32

**Dimon gets \$30m payoff from Citigroup**

FROM ANDREW BUTCHER  
IN NEW YORK

CANTAB Pharmaceuticals, which recently acquired two potential vaccines for cocaine and nicotine addiction, hopes to take another four projects into clinical trials this year, taking the total to seven.

The company will also begin phase II trials of the genital herpes vaccine it is developing with Glaxo Wellcome and of the genital warts treatment that it is developing with SmithKline Beecham.

Jurek Sikorski, chief executive, said the warts trial will not produce results until late next year, while the herpes trial will not report until early 2001.

With cash of £31.2 million at the end of December, and with an annual cash burn of about £10 million, Cantab has enough funds to see it into 2001. Mr Sikorski continues to seek new licensing opportunities to strengthen its pipeline.

Losses in 1998 grew by £4 million to £7.2 million, largely reflecting a reduction in payments from Glaxo Wellcome. Operating expenses were little changed at £13.8 million.

The cocaine vaccine is already undergoing phase I safety trials while the nicotine vaccine will begin similar studies in the second half.

## Chasley Lifestyle placed in hands of receivers

By DOMINIC WALSH

CHASLEY LIFESTYLE, the hotel operator that last year sought a stock market flotation, has been placed in the hands of receivers.

The group's nine hotels are expected to be sold off, although the management of four of them — in Newcastle, Doncaster, Wakefield and Darlington — has already been handed to Friendly Hotels under ten-year operating contracts.

Nick Dargan, one of the receivers from Deloitte & Touche, said that existing plans by Chasley to sell three of the hotels would continue. But he emphasised that all nine, the biggest of which is the Norwich Sport Village, would continue to trade with all staff retained.

The collapse of Chasley, which was founded four years ago by Malcolm Gold and Michael Goletta, comes six months after a boardroom row resulted in the abrupt departure of Mr Gold as chief executive. Mr Gold's previous hotel company, Regal Hotel

Group, suffered a similar fate in 1991, although it subsequently rose from the ashes under new management.

Mr Gold said yesterday that he was surprised at the appointment of receivers. He estimated Chasley had assets worth about £25 million while its debts — after the planned disposal of three smaller hotels — were just £11.5 million.

"I believe investors should get their money back," he added.

But his claims were at odds with the findings of Mr Dargan, who said: "We are still assessing the outstanding indebtedness, but it is likely there will be a shortfall."

Chasley appointed Shaw & Co, the broker, to handle a £30 million flotation at the end of 1997, shortly after it had acquired five properties from Swallow Hotels for about £12 million. Last summer, it was among the bidders for 30 units

\*Please note: gross interest rate comparison on balances of £2,000 or more (as at March 1999) between Chibank Current Account and Barclays Bank Account, Midland Bank Account, First Direct Cheque Account and NatWest Current Account. The rate is variable and paid monthly on balances of £2,000 or more (Barclays quarterly). Gross' rate is the rate of interest payable not taking into account the deduction of income tax at the lower rate. Overdraft available with direct deposit of salary, subject to status with written credit quotation available on request. Registered office: 336 Strand, London WC2R 1HB. © Registered trademark of Citibank NA.



Gloomy forecast: Patrick Pearce, finance director of Country Gardens, the garden centre group that operates in the South East, blamed the British weather for the company's failure to deliver profits in line

with expectations. However, despite what the company described as the worst weather for many years, Country Gardens still managed to report a 22-per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £4.3 million in 1998. Sales at

the garden centres grew by 11 per cent to £54 million. Earnings per share, reflecting internal tax changes and a rights issue fell to 10.86p (13.46p). The total dividend for the year is up 16 per cent to 2.15p.

## German dole queues grow at slower rate

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT

COLD weather in Central Europe lengthened Germany's dole queues last month, with official figures showing the country's unemployment rate up from 11.5 per cent to 11.6 per cent in February.

In the former East Germany, 19 per cent of the population is now on the dole. Across the whole country, 4.64 million people are out of work.

Allowing for seasonal adjustments, however, the official jobless total in Europe's biggest economy fell by 6,000, pegging the adjusted unemployment rate back from 10.6 per cent to 10.5 per cent. Forecasters had expected job queues to lengthen by a further 10,000 in the month. This rare piece of good economic news helped to send share prices higher across euroland but led to small falls in bond prices.

Bernhard Jagoda, head of the federal labour office, said unemployment should show a strong seasonal fall in March and average between 4.1 million and 4.2 million over the year.

Continuing high levels of unemployment and contentious tax reforms have intensified re-arrangements between industry and the new Social Democrat/Green coalition since the key euroland economy was shown unexpectedly to have shrunk by 0.4 per cent in the last quarter of 1998.

The tax reforms mirror changes made several years ago in the UK. They aim to cut the tax burden on lower-paid workers. Industry objects to reforms of company tax, which aim to cut allowances while moving down the formal rate. The effect is to push up corporate taxes, especially for groups such as insurance and power utilities.

Industry groups also complain of increases in wage rates of 4 per cent in engineering and more than 3 per cent in the public sector. Although such rates are low by UK standards, there is virtually no inflation in Germany and the pay trend is one factor behind the standstill in European Central Bank interest rates.

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## Adidas sees 13% decline

Adidas-Salomon, the German sportswear company, reported 1998 net profits of DM401 million (£139 million), down 13.4 per cent from the record profits reported in 1997.

Profits were struck before an extraordinary charge of DM723 million related to the acquisition of Salomon, a fellow manufacturer of sports goods, leaving an overall loss of DM322 million.

The Salomon takeover helped to lift group sales almost 48 per cent to DM9.9 billion and operating profits by 22.6 per cent to DM737 million. The 1998 dividend is unchanged at DM1.65 per share.

### Safestore warning

Shares of Safestore, the AIM-listed self-storage company, dived more than 20 per cent yesterday as it gave a warning that profits for the financial year are going to be significantly below market expectations. The company blamed a significant decline in rental levels at its Croydon site plus the failure to open two new planned sites at Barnet and Southgate in North London on time. The shares fell 11p to 39p.

### NXT seeks cash

NXT, the loudspeakers company, is raising £13 million by way of a placing of new shares at 46p each. The funds will be used to develop the company's new SoundVu technology and to recruit engineers to cope with growing demand for the service. Existing shares rose 3p to 48p.

## Caradon braced for effect of price cuts

By ROBERT COLE, CITY CORRESPONDENT

CARADON, the radiator manufacturer that sold its Everest double-glazing business last week, admitted yesterday that continuing sales at the group were likely to suffer as it cuts prices on many of its products.

Jürgen Hintz, the chief executive, said it has become necessary to reduce prices on many of its products in order to generate long-term sales growth. However, the short-term effect of lower prices would put pressure on turnover and margins.

A wide-ranging restructuring at Caradon undertaken by Mr Hintz led the company to a £134 million loss last year, compared with pre-tax profits of £29 million in 1997.

Most of the losses were attributable to the accounting treatment of goodwill on companies previously acquired. But the underlying picture also shows declines. Pre-tax profits before exceptional items for the year to December 31 were £115 million compared with £129 million.

The loss per share was 39.1p, compared with earnings of 13.9p the previous year. The

total dividend is maintained at 9.5p a share, with an unchanged 6.6p final total payment made last year.

Mr Hintz said: "With comparable sales down 4 per cent and group operating profits before restructuring down 11 per cent, the results for 1998 clearly underline the need for the fundamental changes we are driving. We are reshaping Caradon's business portfolio to focus on strong sectors with good market positions and international scope."

Caradon sold Everest for £40 million, and has raised £80 million so far this year from other disposals. A further ten businesses were earmarked for disposal and Caradon has now offloaded six.

The goodwill write-offs announced yesterday cover all expected losses from all disposals expected to take place this year.

Caradon shares, which fell from 39.5p five years ago to 85p last December, fell 7p to 142.5p yesterday.

Tempus, page 32



John Barnes, chairman of Harry Ramsden's, which analysts see as vulnerable to a takeover

## BUSINESS ROUNDUP Polypipe sets sights on acquisitions

POLYPIPE, the diversified building materials group, is preparing to increase its borrowing facilities after having been presented with "several interesting acquisition opportunities". The group, which has traditionally had minimal borrowings, yesterday said it is looking to expand its operations, either in the UK or Europe, by the end of its financial year this June.

James Corr, the finance director, said: "With interest rates at a predictable and manageable level for the first time in several months we feel comfortable borrowing cash to expand our business." Polypipe, itself the subject of overseas bid rumours, is currently thought to be considering an offer for its rival, Avonside Group, which is valued at about £23 million. In the six months to December 31 Polypipe returned pre-tax profits little changed at £12.2 million (£12 million) on sales of £122.2 million (£119.6 million). Profits were adversely affected by £1 million of costs from new product launches. The interim dividend rises to 1.2p (1.03p). Earnings were 4.99p a share (4.6p). The shares fell 7p to 135p.

## GEO losses increase

GEO Interactive Media, the Internet software developer saw losses in 1998 widen to \$17.5 million (£10.8 million) from \$9.8 million the previous year as the company blamed a drop in revenue from product shipment delays and phasing out of the retail market for its Embaze product. But Naftali Shani, chairman of the Israeli company, quoted in London, said the company was well placed after a year of "dramatic shifts and turmoil" in its markets. The shares fell 45p to 48.5p having dropped from a 12-month high of 181p.

## Expatmet advances

EXPAMET, the engineer that supplies the building and industrial markets, yesterday reported that profits for 1998 were up 21 per cent, and that with a programme of overhead reductions successfully implemented, profits should continue to improve this year. Pre-tax profits came in at £1.8 million on sales up 7 per cent to £119.5 million. Earnings per share rose to 13.35p (10.41p), while the final dividend is up to 2.55p, making a total of 4.5p for the year, an increase of 17 per cent on 1997.

## Goodwin makes plea

SIR MATTHEW GOODWIN, chairman of Crestacare, the long-term healthcare group, said health authorities will have to reverse their policy of emphasising academic qualifications in nursing and concentrating on traditional in-house training to attract trainees and resolve long-term staff shortages in the sector. Sir Matthew made his plea as the company reported pre-tax profits before exceptional items of £5.5 million (£5.4 million). Earnings per share remain at 2.1p while an increased final dividend of 0.75p makes a total of 1.06p (1p).

## Burford's triple buy

BURFORD HOLDINGS, the property investment company, is acquiring a portfolio of three retail properties from Hermes for £89 million. The portfolio comprises Fishergate shopping centre, Preston, and two retail warehouse parks, the Phase II Tunnel Retail Park in West Thurrock, Essex, and the Euro Retail Park in Ipswich. They provide 620,000 sq ft of retail space. Annual rental income is £5.95 million, which is expected to rise to £6.6 million. The consideration reflects a net initial yield of 7.1 per cent on completion of outstanding rent reviews.

## Yule Catto 'resilient' despite trade outlook

By MARTIN BARROW

YULE CATTO, the chemicals and building products company, remains defiant in the face of difficult trading conditions after achieving record profits in 1998.

Lord Catto of Calmeacu, chairman, said many markets are currently experiencing recessionary conditions. However, he remained confident about the outlook for the company.

"As a group we are well accustomed to operating in

relatively hostile trading environments and our past performance emphasises the resilience of our management and activities in sustaining growth through difficult periods," Lord Catto said.

Yesterday the company reported a rise in 1998 pre-tax profits to £41.27 million from £38 million in the previous 12 months.

Adjusted earnings were 26.8p a share, up from 24.4p

previously. A 6.6p final dividend lifts the total to 16p from 10p.

Yesterday the shares fell 2p to 285.5p.

Profits were struck after amortisation of goodwill amounting to £9.7 million. There were also non-recurring costs of £4.6 million, including restructuring costs after last year's acquisition of Holliday Chemical Holdings.

Others on the network include NatWest, Abbey National, Bank of Scotland, Royal Bank of Scotland, Alliance & Leicester and Woolwich.

Despite most UK banks

## Boost for customers as banks join Link

By CAROLINE MERRELL

MILLIONS of banking customers will have easier access to their money after the announcement yesterday that three of the UK's biggest banks are to join the Link cash machine network.

Barclays, Lloyds and Midland yesterday announced their intention to join Link.

This means that all the big high street banks will now be on the network, which will have about 25,000 outlets na-

tionwide. Barclays has already connected its 3,200 cash machines to Link. Midland and Lloyds are to join the network very shortly. John Hardy, Link chief executive, said: "When the final two banks are connected to Link, we will have one single network of cash machines. This will make access to cash significantly more convenient for the customer."

Others on the network include NatWest, Abbey National, Bank of Scotland, Royal Bank of Scotland, Alliance & Leicester, NatWest charges 60p for withdrawals.

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## BBA focuses on higher-growth hygiene market

By PAUL DURMAN

**BBA GROUP**, the materials and aircraft servicing group, believes the higher-growth hygiene markets are about to become an increasingly important part of its business making non-woven textiles.

The company on Monday announced plans to invest £50 million (£31 million) in a plant to make feminine hygiene pads in Tianjin, China. Robert Quarta, chief executive, said this would create sales of \$30 million a year to an important customer segment.

BBA believes that medical and hygiene sales will grow from about half to 75 per cent of its £490 million non-woven business over the next few years. These activities include making the material used in babies' nappies.

The group's pre-tax profits from its material technology businesses — which also include brake components — increased from £97.9 million to

£118 million. This enabled the group to improve its underlying pre-tax profits for 1998 by 7 per cent to £165.1 million. Restructuring costs were covered by a £25.3 million profit on the sale of businesses.

On continuing operations, operating profit was 21 per cent stronger at £168.9 million.

The non-woven business grew 15 per cent, or 6 per cent after stripping out acquisitions that included Veratec, the US company bought for £160.7 million last July. Mr Quarta believes 8 per cent organic growth should be possible this year.

Friction materials grew only 3 per cent, held back by weak demand from Rover and other UK customers. BBA hopes to see an increasing benefit from after-market sales this year.

BBA's network of 53 aircraft servicing operations in the US enabled the aviation division to increase profits from £42.1 million to £50.9

million. In the past year, the business has been strengthened by the acquisitions of H&S Aviation in the UK. More recently in the US, BBA bought UNC Airwork for £35.5 million and AMR Combs for £105.6 million.

Mr Quarta said that BBA is now able to offer a one-stop shop for aircraft fuelling, servicing and repairs. He expects continued growth from the aviation business this year.

Basic earnings per share rose 10 per cent to 26.1 p. BBA is paying a final dividend of 6.15p to increase the total 10 per cent to 8.8p a share.

Mr Quarta said: "We believe the repositioning of BBA over the last five years to focus on services with a considerably higher consumable and after-market content has resulted in a group with a substantially more robust and well-balanced international business portfolio."



Terry Garthwaite, left, Senior finance director, and Andrew Parrish announced a profit rise

## RSA properties sold for £392m

By SAEEED SHAH

**ROYAL & SunAlliance**, (RSA) the insurance group, yesterday announced the sale of 75 properties for £392 million to Moorfield Capital Partners (MCP).

MCP is a new limited partnership set up by Moorfield Estates, a property investment company. Moorfield will invest £12 million for a 25 per cent stake in MCP, financed by a one-for-three open offer of shares at 28p, underwritten by RSA, which could leave the insurer with up to 25 per cent of Moorfield's enlarged issued ordinary share capital. Yesterday, Moorfield shares closed up 31p at 26p.

The remaining 75 per cent of MCP will be taken up by other partners, which have yet to be identified.

RSA will receive £332 million in cash, and a £60 million vendor loan note. The buyer has arranged a £282 million non-recourse debt facility.

The insurer said that it would use the cash raised from the sale for "general investment purposes". Last week, RSA announced that it would give back £750 million to shareholders, at the same time as reporting a 39 per cent slump in 1998 profits to £602 million.

Bob Mendelsohn, chief executive, said RSA had finally completed its reorganisation after the merger of Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance three years ago and was now determined to use shareholders' capital more efficiently.

Analysts said RSA was reducing solvency capital by moving its exposure from property and equities to less volatile assets such as bonds. The properties bought by MCP produce a gross rental income of £35.9 million, with a gross yield of 9.1 per cent.

## Readymix turns in profit rise

By CARL MORTISHED

THE Irish economic boom is keeping the concrete mixers turning in the Republic and generating more business for Readymix, which saw its pre-tax profit gain 15 per cent to Ir£14.5 million (£12.5 million) in the year to December.

High levels of construction activity in the Republic of Ireland boosted sales by 10 per cent to Ir£124 million with housebuilding dominating the sector. Readymix said yesterday that construction output was strong in all sectors of the economy except agriculture, and margins were maintained.

In contrast, sales in Northern Ireland were flat with weaker profits. Severe price competition is hurting margins in the region after cutbacks in infrastructure spending.

Readymix is proposing to raise the total dividend for the year 17 per cent to Ir3.11p.

## Wilson Connolly buoyant

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

**WILSON CONNOLLY**, the housebuilder, is forecasting a strong market this year, with the average selling price of its houses expected to climb to £90,000, 14 per cent above the figure for 1998.

Ian Black, chief executive, said the market was "more buoyant than we might have dared hope just a few months ago". The company believes cheaper mortgages will offset fears over the global economic climate.

With the company's order book 5 per cent ahead on last year, the rise in house prices means that its forward sales position is 20 per cent ahead.

Pre-tax profit for the year to December 31 rose 17 per cent to £44.5 million, while earnings per share climbed 18 per cent to 15.5p. The final dividend, due on June 1, was set at 14.45p giving a total of 6.05p — 10 per cent up on 1998.

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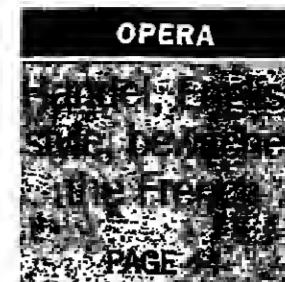
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THE TIMES

# ARTS



## When the demons hit the canvas

For many people, Jackson Pollock's painting defines the avant-garde at its vilest. Richard Cork tells us why the Tate's show is required viewing

**H**alf a century has passed since Jackson Pollock became the most notorious painter to emerge in postwar America. But for many he remains the epitome of the modern artist's capacity to bewilder and alienate. Laying his colossal canvases on a paint-splattered floor, and then dancing round them in an ecstasy of dripping and pouring, Pollock may seem the cynical embodiment of everything suspicious about the avant-garde. Reviled as a charlatan, he is still an easy target for anyone seeking to mock the supposed madness of Modernism.

Pollock did indeed suffer from a turbulent psyche, and booze often transformed him into a violent, loud-mouthed boor. The truth, though, is that nobody could have been less bogus. He was painfully serious about the need to forge an heroic and audacious new art. From the outset of this enthralling Tate retrospective he appears embroiled in a life-or-death struggle to convey his urgent vision of the world.

The surprisingly small self-portrait that kick-starts this disquieting image soon after moving from California to New York in 1930. Only 18, he strove throughout the decade ahead to find a coherent voice. But he succeeded only in succumbing to alcoholism and exposing the extent of his debt to mentors as diverse as the populist Thomas Hart Benton and the Mexican revolutionary David Alfaro Siqueiros.

Whatever their differences, both these painters deserved their greatest ambitions for mural projects. Pollock would himself arrive at his supreme achievements by tackling wall-size surfaces, but his 1930s paintings remained modest in size. In this sense they reflect the difficulties of the Depression years, even if a restlessness runs through them. At one point, a painting called *The Flame* fills the entire canvas with incendiary brush-

'In his art  
he seems  
embroiled  
in a life  
or death  
struggle'

marks that are strikingly prophetic. Its leaping, writhing forms approach abstraction, yet Pollock's hopes were centred on the human figure.

The aggression latent in

most of his early work erupted at the end of the decade, when he painted a murderous image where naked bodies swarm viciously below a menacing knife. It looks, at first, like a mythological scene. In savagery, though, was also a measure of Pollock's inner torment.

In an alarming canvas called *Birth* a face resembling a gruesomely distorted version of his early self-portrait snarls in a maelstrom of twisted limbs, yelling mouths and predatory teeth. It seems to dramatise Pollock's notion that self-discovery would be a hard-fought and desperate affair.

He was right. During the 1940s, when the New York avant-garde finally gained international ascendancy, Pollock waged an almost Oedipal war against the inhibiting influence of Miró and Picasso. In 1943 he overcame their example by adopting a technique of pouring with oil and enamel. It released a new vitality, with accident playing a crucial role; even if most of Pollock's paintings were still dominated by a search for expressive figuration.

Both these urges contribute to his first outright masterpiece, the so-called *Mural* commissioned by Peggy Guggenheim for the entrance hall of her Manhattan house. Pollock ended up painting it on a 20ft canvas, by far the largest surface he had ever tackled. He even had to tear down a wall in his own apartment to accommodate it, and after a long delay completed the painting in a burst of hectic activity.

**T**he adrenalin surge he must have experienced can still be felt in front of this ferocious tour de force. At first sight abstract, the frieze-like image relies for its muscular impact on the elongated black forms striding across the canvas with whiplash zeal. Pollock allows them to be invaded by more ragged elements, as if the forms were being forced to



Number 23 (1948), done in enamel on gesso. The years from 1948 to 1950 were the greatest of Pollock's life, when a new maturity on canvas coincided with mass fame — or notoriety

March through a jungle of bur-

geoning vegetation.

But their identity as human bodies becomes clear. The entire painting amounts an assault on the retina, envenomed by swipes and spurts of the brush and a particularly bilious use of yellow.

No wonder that Peggy Guggenheim eventually gave *Mural* away. It is an ungratifying triumph, asserting the qualities that Pollock pinpointed when he explained in 1944 that "living is keener, more demanding, more intense and expansive in New York than in the West". Before he was able to develop the discoveries initiated in *Mural*, however, Pollock realised that he had to leave the city. Its dynamism was too overwhelming for his unstable disposition: several works are in danger of choking on their appetite for excess.

The blizzards of paint Pollock hurled at his canvases could end up looking congested rather than liberating.

Only after Pollock and his

wife Lee Krasner moved to a farmhouse on Long Island did he arrive at a formidable maturity. The drinking ceased, for a while, while the proximity to countryside and Accabonac Creek must have encouraged him to admit more elemental references to his work. Titles as evocative as *Sea Change* and *Enchanted Forest* accentuate the new mood.

But the real breakthrough came in 1948. Pollock realised that, however much he flicked, dripped, splashed and trailed

his paint over the surface, his agitated mark-making need not obscure the underlying presence of a plain canvas ground.

As a result, *Number 1A*, 1948 is able to breathe with a marvellous sense of airiness.

Three great canvases —

*Lavender Mist*, *One* Number

31, and *Number 32* — are gathered together at the Tate to demonstrate his mastery.

Although they are the product of the same galvanic working method, flinging and splashing on to floor-based canvases in his barn-like East Hampton studio, the three paintings differ radically from each other. *Lavender Mist* is a vaporous work, where oil, enamel and aluminium paint are applied so densely that our eyes cannot penetrate their blurred, layered complexity.

*Number 32* goes to the other extreme, relying solely on skeins of black enamel to assert their demonic, lunging vitality on a pale ground. But the crowning achievement is

*One Number 31*, where all Pollock's finest impulses meet in a unique synthesis. At once sublime and menacing, all-encompassing and unfathomable, it must surely be counted among the supreme pinnacles of Western art. Its assurance seems absolute, yet Pollock's exploration of surging, limitless renewal is also charged with fear and vulnerability.

His ability to confront this vision of proliferating immensity may well have contributed to his own destruction. Did the vastness conjured in *One Number 31* undermine his fragile stability? It is impossible to tell, but the downward spiral of his subsequent life and art is undeniable. He never regained the miraculous poise of 1950, and the depre-

sive blackness in his return to figurative imagery discloses the extent of his torment.

In one final summoning of energy, he managed to complete the majestic *Blue Poles* in 1952. Hanging on the end wall of the Tate survey, it has an incandescent impact. But the poles flung with such brio on to its deliriously scrambled surface also resemble tree-trunks stripped and scorched by the advent of some terminal conflagration.

The enchanted forest of 1947 now seemed to him irretrievably despoiled, and Pollock's short life ended in a drunken car-smash only four years after *Blue Poles* heralded its maker's own catastrophe.

• Tate Gallery 0171-887 8000 from tomorrow until June 6

John Russell Taylor on a Scottish master of pastel now rediscovered

## Educating us about Archie



Archibald Skirving's  
Robert Dundas of Arniston

**A**most everyone will have seen one image by or after Archibald Skirving, but very few would be able to put a name to its author. Skirving, ironically, holds his (minimal) place in the public imagination with one of his shiest and most non-formal works: his portrait head in red chalk of Robert Burns. From the beginning it was endlessly reproduced in editions of Burns, and thence became the image of choice for any artist contemplating a fancy picture of the poet being struck by inspiration, spending a social evening with the lads, or looking back at Highland Mary.

So who was Skirving, and what else did he do? The first question is partially answered by the title of the big new show at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, *Raeburn's Rival*. After recent shows devoted to the other two important Scottish portraitists of the 18th century, Ramsay and Raeburn, it was only logical to fill us in on the third figure in the triumvirate. But then, any triumvirate is liable to have its Lepidus as well as its Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, and possibly Skirving is deservedly that forgotten third. It must be significant that he needs identifying in the context of his two near-contemporaries.

Well, it is and it isn't. It seems likely that Skirving is not a name to conjure with in the same way as Ramsay and Raeburn for one simple reason: they painted mainly in oils, and he excelled primarily in pastel. Sir Walter Scott described him as "an unrivalled artist as a painter in crayons".

The Edinburgh show demonstrates clearly how undervalued this was. Skirving (1749-1819) began as a miniaturist in Edinburgh, went on to work in London, and then in 1786 settled in Rome for

niston embracing what appears to be a per owl.

Skirving's men are equally convincing, not least the self-portrait in a black beaver hat, executed in Rome. Seemingly he garnered a reputation for personal eccentricity in his later years, and perhaps not all his sitters cared to be shown warts and all.

But neither of these let alone his preference for pastel, of which he emerges as one of the great 18th-century masters, justifies the neglect into which he has fallen. Not for the first time, the National Galleries of Scotland are putting right a major wrong.

• Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1 Queen Street, Edinburgh (0131-332 2266) Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2-5pm, until April 5

PAINTING, apparently, is back. Led by a

revival of interest in New York, The

Edinburgh artist gathers together a discordant gang in Painting Lab. Ten London-based painters attempt to update an outmoded uniform by relating it to the mass-produced imagery of a modern age. Jason Brooks beautifully reinterprets a photograph of a funeral wreath on to a monumental canvas. Nicky Hoberman finds inspiration in Polaroids. Her airbrushed Lollitas deride the naivety of a childhood snapshot.

Other artists play around with abstract patterns and graphic motifs. They use computers to remap forms or collage digital images into painterly pieces. But the brushstroke seems pretty much banished. And though colour — inspired by this season's fashion designs — may make a striking return in a Graham Little piece, I'm not sure that this work amounts to anything much more meaningful than a radiantly delicious-looking cross between a Dulux colour chart and a liqueur assort.

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## AROUND THE GALLERIES

□ THE traffic underpass has acquired a sombre aura since the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. At the Tate Gallery, *Thomas Demand* follows in the footsteps of a number of recent film directors in playing on this ominous atmosphere. Turned is not for nervous drivers. To a muffled soundtrack of thundering wheels, the camera swings down into the pillars of an empty underpass. Then blackness. The same loop plays again and again until the viewer is mesmerised, vertiginous. Does the car swerve at one point? It's hard to be sure. Demand plays tricks with imprinted memories of our urban environment.

• Millbank, SW1 (0171-887 8000) until April 25

□ AFTER the Britpack fetched such fantastic prices at auction, the Helly Nahmad Gallery is putting its own collection up for sale. Here are Hirst's *Spills*, Quinn's heads and Hume's hospital

doors. The luxurious space is the perfect setting, so why don't they seem so exciting any more?

• Cork St, London W1 (0171-494 3200) until April 30

□ AT A time when digital technology plays tricks on the photograph, a group of six artists at Purdy Hicks defend their skill. As the viewer focuses and stares, he is drawn into an almost metaphysical world. Fifteen years have passed since Flora Neussis crept out into his garden on a thunderous night and put photographic paper into a shrubbery. The flashes of lightning created photofractures. Spidery silhouettes are etched with light, petals collect still pools of darkness, stamens pencil fragile forms. Paul Keany works the same alchemy with rock and water, with beaded bubbles and patterns of spume against the gleaming blackness of stone. d5 Hopton St, London SE1 (0171-401 9595) until April 10

RACHEL CAMPBELL-JOHNSON

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Rupert Christianse, Daily Telegraph 1997

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**■ CONCERTS**

Goethe celebrated

## Songs from the master

The strange and picaresque novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, a sort of *Tristam Shandy* without the jokes and punctuated by poems, is hardly the easiest way into the works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. So it was brave of Roger Vignoles to focus on these songs – and the script – in the programme he devised as part of the South Bank's weekend celebrating the 250th anniversary of the German poet's birth.

Nothing, after all, reveals Goethe himself more tellingly than the figure of Wilhelm Meister: his obsession with the theatre; his acute observation of humanity's outcasts; his deep longing for Italy.

Yet it is the songs which

**GOETHE CONCERTS**  
**Allen/Kringelborn**  
Queen Elizabeth Hall

bert Schumann and Wolf with readings from the novel turned out to be more seductive in the idea than in its realisation.

This was partly because of the insufferably mumbled and gabbed narration of Samuel West and partly because the performances of the songs themselves really did tell us all we needed to know. The Norwegian soprano Solveig Kringelborn sang out the unquiet heart of young Mignon. She recreated in glowing voice Hugo Wolf's wonderfully impassioned fleshing-out of the anguished questions of *Kennst du das Land?*. And, with the silver side of her soprano, she caught quite unconsciously the poignancy of Mignon's angel-song. So *lass mich schreinen*.

HILARY FINCH

Thomas Allen, for his part, gave voice to the shadowy figure of the blind harper, stealing from door to door in Schubert's eloquently simple settings. Vignoles' whose pianistic stage-management of the songs was as illuminating as his selection, also accompanied Schubert's rarely heard duet version of *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*.

In the first half of the evening, Goethe and his composers were free to speak for themselves. And there was plenty to say. There was the surprise of Carl Loewe's chilling setting of *Erlkönig*, generally monopolised in recital by Schubert, and his *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, both revealed as real performance art by Allen and Vignoles. And, within this somewhat overcrowded evening, Beethoven and Liszt illuminated Goethe's innermost soul anew in deeply perceptive performances of songs such as *Mailed and Über allen Gipfeln*.

HILARY FINCH

## Style and substance

One of the problems the period-instrument movement regularly has to face is that a modern concert may well span several decades of composition. Which instruments, then, are to be used? Compromises are inevitable, as exemplified by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's Sunday evening concert that brought the Goethe weekend to a triumphant close.

Since the works included were Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*, Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody* and Liszt's *Faust Symphony*, dating from 1810, 1869 and 1857 respectively, the issues are complex, for instruments and performance practice varied widely from city to city and decade to decade. Furthermore, the OAE originally specialised in earlier music anyway: Brahms and Liszt are new territory for them.

As a result, a compromise pitch just below modern concert pitch was adopted (fair enough, while some violins had chin-rests, some not, some cellos had spikes, some not,

**OAE/Elder Festival Hall**

and the policy on matters such as vibrato seemed equally inconsistent.

The hollow sound of natural horns was aptly chilling in the introduction to the *Alto Rhapsody*, depicting the symbolically bleak landscape of Goethe's winter journey. The mezzo soprano Jane Irwin also conveyed that desolation, as well as the consolation of the final stanza, where she was joined by the well-drilled men of the Philharmonia Chorus.

The conducting of Mark Elder ensured an empathetic response to the text, and a suitably dramatic reflection of heroic ideals in the *Egmont Overture*.

But it was his masterly control in the *Faust Symphony* that delivered a convincing account in spite of a problematic score and compromised circumstances. Given Elder's operatic credentials, it should be no surprise that he was able to

bring this drama of the imagination to vibrant life. But what also impressed was his handling of the first movement's symphonic structure often criticised as sprawling, certainly idiosyncratic. The fanfare passages marked "grandioso" were jubilant, never vulgar, while the movement as a whole (depicting Faust himself) had the requisite restless surge and an irresistible sweep.

In the slow "Gretchen" movement that desolates, as well as the consolation of the final stanza, where she was joined by the well-drilled men of the Philharmonia Chorus. The conducting of Mark Elder ensured an empathetic response to the text, and a suitably dramatic reflection of heroic ideals in the *Egmont Overture*.

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999

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**THEATRE**

Soliloquies for starters

# Slings, arrows and Versace

**THEATRE:** Heather Neill finds out why 19 amateur groups are busy putting their own spin on *Hamlet*

**M**onday morning at a girls' school in South London, and *Hamlet* is busy chopping his play up into manageable chunks and encouraging improvisation suggested by the story. Rupert Wickham hasn't even started thinking about how to interpret the title character; for now his purpose at Plumstead Manor School is to lead a workshop, the first in a venture known as Theatre Unlimited's *Hamlet* Project.

Theatre Unlimited is a company determined to live up to its name. Its two artistic directors, Wickham and Christopher Geelan, are intent upon attracting a new audience into the theatre and giving them "an experience which places theatre at the centre of their lives".

The result is an ambitious community scheme which for three weeks this month will bring 19 amateur groups to perform on the stage of the Greenwich Theatre. Each group has been allocated half an hour to present a play, based on themes in *Hamlet*, as a curtain-raiser to Geelan's professional production with Wickham as the Prince of Denmark.

This idealistic plan has a practical financial underpinning. Each group is asked to contribute £1,500 in return for two months of weekly workshops led by one of two directors with educational experience, as well as advice from an actor and the production's designer and stage manager.

Poverty groups are being supported by a galaxy of starry patrons, from Alan Ayckbourn to Zoë Ball, although most will raise the money by selling

their allocation of 100 tickets. The result is almost £30,000 guaranteed in advance — as well as 100 people in the audience at each performance who might not be there otherwise.

As education director of the English Shakespeare Company, Geelan has a respected reputation for bringing exciting Shakespeare to more than 100,000 young people, including primary schoolchildren, each year. Finding groups willing to commit to the project nevertheless took time — sometimes, he says, Theatre Unlimited resorted to "the bombardment principle". Adults were the most elusive — the directors had hoped to interest groups of psychiatrists and lawyers, but in the end settled mainly for schools, with one group of adults, all Asian, preparing their contribution on Sunday.

"One group used an American gangster style"

The 400-seat Greenwich Theatre, closed since its London Arts Board funding lapsed last year, is an ideal venue, says Geelan, who is confident that groups of pupils who are studying the text will fill the remaining seats. He is planning to give an occasional pre-show talk, but the evening will begin usually at 6.30pm with one of the devised pieces, followed by a break and then *Hamlet* at 7.30pm. This will be a three-hour version, straightforward but not "dumbed down", the cuts arrived at by "trimming" speeches rather than cutting characters. Fortinbras, for instance, dispensed with in some productions, is preserved.

At Plumstead Manor School on that first Monday, Shirley Sewell's GCSE drama group were enjoying interpreting episodes of the script in different styles, from American gangster to *EastEnders*. The ruling family came to grief beside a Hollywood swimming pool talking of Versace, but however far the students roamed from the original, Wickham always encouraged them to interweave Shakespeare's lines with their own.

**H**e was also present in the early stages of preparation at the Swaminarayan Temple School in Harelden, North London, where a group of seven Hindu GCSE students were improvising with a will.

Three re-enacting a trench warfare scene, pressed chairs into service as a dugout while the others imagined being visited by an inexplicable, frightening force in the jungle for which the school's potted plants provided makeshift vegetation. Between workshops,

rehearsals and experiments continued with their teacher, Selina Moses. When I visited the Swaminarayan Temple School a fortnight later, with six weeks still to go, the students had decided that they were going to investigate the fragmentation of personality under stress; as suggested by Hamlet's predicament, and had allocated themselves aspects of character in a futuristic setting. Somehow "To be or not to be" was going to be integrated into the final version.

What about Wickham's own preparation? He admits to having had less musing time than he would like — the consequence of administrative duties — but says he cannot think of anything he would rather be doing. He has decided that two scenes in particular, the Nunnery and Closet scenes, are "the most profound and the most interesting psychologically". That Hamlet's relation-

ship with Ophelia is coloured by his relationship with Gertrude. He has come to the conclusion that Hamlet is a thinker by nature, but that suffering from melancholy is not his usual state, although his mental balance is certainly disturbed at the beginning of the play.

"If you honestly and pro-

foundly explore the character,

that's what it's cathartic for

the audience if you shy away

from that, it becomes self-indulgent.

John Gielgud said

that more than any other char-

acter you have to find it in

yourself and because of that

every Hamlet is unique."

Will be watch the curtain-

raisers? "As many as possible,

yes. It's nice to have something

different to take into the per-

formance with you each

evening. But the bottom line is to tell the story well."

• *Hamlet* is at the Greenwich Theatre (0870-840 1111) from Saturday for three weeks

**Congreve's curiously short-witted comedy**

**P**eerling at her cracked complexion in a glass the widowed Lady Wishfort describes her face as "an old peeled wall", a famously bizarre simile that puts the audience on her side, no matter that she is a stubborn old bird who won't let her niece marry the man she fancies. In Sam Walters's current production Auriol Smith's flirtatious dither gives the line its due: we are duly delighted by her, and we laugh.

But while it is not the only amusing line in Congreve's comedy, on the Orange Tree's boxing-ring stage its fellows take a long time to arrive. Not

until the final scene, when all the bewildering subplots are disentangled, does a comic spirit truly take wing, and this is chiefly because the play's villain, Auriol Smith's flirtatious dither gives the line its due: we are duly delighted by her, and we laugh.

With the enjoyable play of words and the expression of unexpected feelings, is surprisingly thin on the ground. This is even the case in the celebrated scene where Millamant and Mirabell tease each other into marriage. Amanda Royle and Jeremy Crutchley say the lines: experienced actors, they look at each other and listen to each other, altering facial expression or remaining coolly impassive as they deem appropriate. Yet the scene raises barely a smile.

It is true that the plot of this play is not only difficult to summarise but defies understanding even while it unfolds in front of us. Two of the women are wealthy, and schemes to obtain their fortunes or prevent others obtaining them are proposed, revised, abandoned and replaced. One or two characters appear to have some hold over one or two others but it is easy to miss what this is, leaving yawning gaps in our understanding of what drives them.

Looking to the production to help us to sort out these matters, we are not encouraged by a setting that is bare except for



Jeremy Crutchley and Lucy Tregear at the Orange Tree

some chairs that are occasionally on view, nor by costumes that dress the entire cast — whether baronet, fop or lady's maid — in identical dagged jerkins worn over white jeans or skirts.

Certainly this turns our attention mostly to the faces, and thence to the words, yet there is so much posing and posturing to their movements, such feigning and feinting in the exchanges, that the characters soon forfeit our concern and seldom fully regain it.

There may be a case for keeping fans, card tables and candle sconces out of Restoration revivals, trusting the words to carry the day. But this production does not prove it.

JEREMY KINGSTON

**GOOD**  
by C.P. TAYLOR

THE DONMAR CELEBRATES THIS AWARD-WINNING MASTERPIECE IN A NEW PRODUCTION DIRECTED BY MICHAEL GRANDAGE

DONMAR





Doing battle with the Bard: Rupert Wickham and GCSE students Arti Patel, Rupa Patel and Bhavik Patel from the Swaminarayan Temple School act out a scene of trench warfare

## Care for the arts? Then share with them

If subsidy, sponsorship and audiences can't fund the arts, who can?

Simon Tait meets a businessman who thinks he has the answer



Down with central Government: Gerald Scarfe cartoons help to create ArtShare's identity

"a matrix, a flexible, do-it-yourself kit which guarantees that whatever you give isn't going to be frittered on some loss-making brainwave. It goes into an endowment fund for revenue funding which has a limited annual drawdown of 5 per cent. Simple as that."

This is individual giving in which a number of shares can be donated from a portfolio, or a piece of a brand new company can be donated. The arts organisation then builds up a portfolio of its own to create an income stream — a £2 million fund should yield around £150,000 a year.

When Brown looked at the facts, at first he wasn't sure himself that it could be that

simple. "The figures are extraordinary," Brown says.

"The Stock Exchange is capitalised at about £1.4 trillion, and about 15 or 16 per cent of that is controlled by individuals which means about £224 billion. That's a fantastic potential resource."

He went to accountant friends at Deloitte & Touche and Arthur Andersen, who gave him the thumbs-up. "The reason something like this hasn't happened before," says David Oliver of Arthur Andersen, "is that arts organisations were so strapped that they were looking for cash to solve the immediate problems; they weren't really looking for schemes which would inter-

vene discipline in financial management.

"The other reason is that there is no Gift Aid tax break for this as there would be for a personal cash donation, and a small adjustment by the Chancellor which would make no significant difference to Treasury income could ensure that ArtShare changes financial security for the arts."

Brown, a keen amateur violinist, started his financial services company 25 years ago. As his success grew he became particularly keen to help top musicians to get decent instruments, and has so far spent about £4 million on that. Since then he has gone into management and in 1990 founded the

Cambridge Arts is now two years after reopening, turning the corner and should break even this year. Its ArtShare programme, launched on March 1, has already persuaded two donors to give shares, one donation worth £5,000. Oliver has become a patron of the scheme, as have Sir Geoffrey Cass, the chairman of the RSC, the Liberal Democrat MP Robert MacLennan and Tim Melville-Ross, Director-General of the Institute of Directors. Gerald Scarfe has designed the promotional package for nothing.

"This is not a quick fix, that's the last thing the arts want at the moment," says Brown. "It's going to take some time, but not enough thinking about the medium and long term has been done. This will give a basis to build future security on."

• For information on ArtShare phone 01223 357131, or email nigel.brown@nwbrown.co.uk

Thursday 11 March 7.30pm

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

**JOSÉ CURA**

conductor/tenor

A gala concert of music by Verdi, Leoncavallo, Mascagni and Puccini

Sponsored by ROSENBLATT SOLICITORS

Royal Festival Hall



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**LISTINGS**

Ayckbourn in Leeds

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999

**OPERA**

Mishap for 'golden couple'

**ARTS**

# Even the corpse was cheered

**RECOMMENDED TODAY**

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Mart Hargreaves

**LONDON**

**ANDRE PREVIN:** The concert series celebrating the 70th birthday of the dynamic conductor and classical music personality finally goes off the ground after last Sunday's cancellation with Kirin Te Kanawa was cancelled. Here Previn conducts the London Symphony Orchestra in two 20th-century British premieres: Holst's *Planets* & Fifth Symphony and Britten's innovative Spring Symphony. For the latter the LSO is joined by its chorus, with soloists Dame Felicity Lott, Roberts Almgren and John Mark Andrey. Barbican (0171-389 8881). Tonight, 7.30pm. £5.

**TAKE THE FIRE:** Four monologues for women (gambler, maid, prostitute, desperate lover) by Jean Cocteau, performed by Amanda Harris. Paul Carrington's direction weaves them together. Lyric Studio, Wc (0161-741 8701). Opens tonight. Seats 5pm.

**BACK2BACK:** A musical double bill: Sharon O. Clarke stars in Lost and Found with music by Porter, Ellington, Warren Williams while Peter Straker and his band play songs from the 1930s. Both shows are based on songs by Jacques Brel. Bridewell (0171-936 3456). Opens tonight, 7pm.

**ELSEWHERE:** Alan Ayckbourn's triptych of plays *Intimate Exchanges* hinges on whether Celia (who smokes a cigarette) or her son, in their Affairs in a Tent, who smokes it and starts a whirlwind romance. Courtyard (0113-213 7700). Opens tonight, 7.45pm. £5.

**NEW WEST END SHOWS**

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London

■ House full, return only ■ Some seats available ■ Seats at all prices

**SPEER:** Nausica Maria Brandauer directs and plays the title role of Hitler's master architect in Esther Weizsäcker's West End debut in Almeida (0171-359 4404).

**SLAVY'S SNOWSHOW:** The novelist Patti Slavy and man and wife Steve Polatin return, with new material, new clowns as well as his unforgettable finales. Piccadilly Theatre (0171-389 1734).

**BLUE HEART:** Carol Churchill's part of plays (Heart's Desire and Blue Heart) continue to charm through links with local stars. Max Stafford-Clark directs for Out Of Joint, Pleasance Theatre (0171-609 1900).

**MACBETH:** Rufus Sewell and Sally Dexter play the superstitious King and his Queen in a生产 Macbeth (0171-493 5041).

**SHOCKED PETER:** The Schismos is back, wonderfully



Stanislaw Skrowaczewski conducts in Manchester

If there is anything better for a *Mascagni* enthusiast than a performance of *L'Amico Fritz* — the once enormously successful comedy written just a year after *Cavalleria rusticana* — it is a performance in which the audience gets a second bite at the famous Cherry Duet. In this case, however, it was not an encore or anything premeditated but the result of a mistake by Angela Gheorghiu as Suzel. Having so charmingly picked a bowl of cherries for Roberto Alagna as Fritz, she jumped a few bars ahead, covered her face in horror and refused to continue.

The conductor, Evelino Pido, clearly wanted to go on, but when Alagna started waving at him as well he had no choice but to stop the orchestra and start the whole section again. The audience was delighted. They applauded Gheorghiu when she stopped, applauded Alagna when he blew her a kiss, applauded them both when they got things more or less sorted out. One solitary boo at the end of the performance was the only overt suggestion that anyone was less than happy with what had not, for the Alagna family, been an entirely creditable occasion.

Everyone knows that Gheorghiu and Alagna now come to opera productions on their own terms. It's either that or they don't do it at all. Well, they are worth a compromise here and there and if it means having

**OPERA**

By Philip Ross

London

■ Seats at all prices

■ House full, return only ■ Some seats available ■ Seats at all prices

the sets designed by the tenor's brothers, David and Frederico Alagna, it could even be a good thing. In fact, the design was a fairly harmless thing — unimaginative but authentically 19th-century Alsace in style — until the beginning of the third act. At this point, after a long interval and during an orchestral prelude that is one of the most attractive episodes in the whole score, an exterior wall was precariously and distractingly raised to reveal the interior where the act takes place. The only point of this, it seemed, was to allow *Fritz* to come out of his front door, pick up a kite and go back in again before the wall was blown out of the way.

Although the symbolism of that event was quite impenetrable, it was welcome if only because it was a sign of life from the director of the production, Fabrizio Melano, who otherwise seemed inclined just to let his singers get on with it. If help was needed by Gheorghiu and Alagna, who are ill-adjusted in age as the besotted farmer's daughter and the confirmed bachelor landowner, even more help was required by Lorenzo Saccomani



Despite glitches, Angela Gheorghiu and Roberto Alagna could do no wrong in the Monte Carlo audience's eyes

as the rabbi whose ambition it is to marry them off. Anna Bonitaobus was more fortunate in that, as a dramatically irrelevant but musically useful gypsy boy violinist, she had to be no more than conventionally bright and cheerful.

Anyway, with such vocal distinction in the two main roles a persuasive case was made for Mascagni's score. Surprisingly elegant, charmingly intimate, fancifully orchestrated, unfailingly tuneful, conscientiously adapted to the Alsatian setting of

the Suardon libretto, it is a disarmingly modest inspiration that could well win friends in this country in anything like an intelligent production. It doesn't really need stars, either.

GERALD LARNER

## Handel top of the pops

**Studio Classique**  
Bordeaux

It's silly to sound surprised, but somehow one still is: the audience sits patiently through nearly four hours of rarefied Baroque opera and then, instead of running for the exits (and dinner) at the witching hour stays to applaud. Not all that long ago operatic Handel was something of a rarity, relished by a chosen few in limited seasons: he is now a mainstream representative composer, a peer of Mozart, Verdi and Wagner. Put these pieces on properly — with good singers and minimal cuts — and audiences are knocked sideways by the sheer musical riches.

Mind you, any performance has a head start in Victor Louis's Grand Théâtre of 1780, one of the most beautiful opera houses in Europe. Stage and auditorium — capacity slightly more than 1,000 — are built entirely of wood, and the acoustics are gloriously plushy. Indeed, the warmth of the sound produced by the National Or-

chestra of Bordeaux Aquitaine was slightly surprising in these days of wily "authentic" sound, but under Jane Glover the playing found a nice balance between the capabilities of modern instruments and proper period manners: buoyant speeds, but pliant phrasing and musical lines really played through. Especially satisfying were the vocal embel-lishments worked out between conductor and singers: they always sounded natural and certainly showed off the voices.

And there were plenty of voices to be shown off. Mireille Delunsch was delicious as Cleopatra: she has a wide range of vocal colour at her command and she is an extremely witty performer, which helps in Handel. Nathalie Stutzmann was Caesar.

RODNEY MILNES

not a huge voice but very precise in her florid music; Kathleen Kühlmann was in top form as Cornelia; tiny, vulnerable Isabelle Cals was a vocally assured, touching Sextus. Brian Bassano was less flamboyant a Polemy than he had been in the Royal Opera's quickly forgotten effort of last year, and there was another remarkable counter-tenor in Rachid Ben Abdesslem Nireno.

Alison Chitty's set of translucent panels, beautifully lit by Peter Mumford, had an elegance to match the auditorium, and Stephen Langridge's straightforward production betrayed only moments of unnecessary panic — a peculiar obsession for *Belle de* and suddenly, in the context of a generally modern-dress staging, putting the protagonists into full 18th-century fig for the final duet. Unnecessary because all you really need is with Handel and sing him.

And there were plenty of voices to be shown off. Mireille Delunsch was delicious as Cleopatra: she has a wide range of vocal colour at her command and she is an extremely witty performer, which helps in Handel. Nathalie Stutzmann was Caesar.

**GREAT BRITISH HOPES**

### Rising stars in the arts firmament

**DANIEL HOPE**

Profession: Violinist.

Age: 24.

When did it all start? Very early. When he was a hyperactive baby, Daniel's parents would take him to open rehearsals for concerts simply to get some peace and quiet. At four, he'd pick up knitting needles and mimic violin playing. "It was clear I needed another psychiatrist or a violin teacher."

Mentors? After deciding on the latter, Daniel studied for four years with Sheila Nelson, spent two unhappy years, too early, at the Menzies School, and ended up at the Junior Department for the Royal College of Music. He was spotted by double-bassist Gary Carr who invited him on to his Channel 4

show, and by Dmitri Sitkovetsky who led him to Maxim Vengerov's teacher, Zakan Bron. But Bron lived in Germany so Hope followed him there, and is now based in Hamburg. While there he met the reclusive Alfred Schnittke shortly before he died, and began an inspiring series of meetings and discussions with the composer.

Why the obsession with Schnittke? "Because of the sheer passion of his music, tinged with a certain bleak quality. It's a ticking bomb: seething rage juxtaposed with total numbness. It's so exciting to play!"

First disc? A debut on Chandos with, of course, Schnittke; and also Takemitsu and Weill. Barry Millington gave it three stars of



high praise on these pages.

Musical focus at the moment? "I'm learning the Schumann Violin Concerto, and trying to get to the bottom of all the differences in the newly revised version."

Where can we hear him? This Saturday he is directing and playing Mozart Concertos in Roermond, Holland; and on March 20 at 2pm he will be in Borders Bookshop, Oxford Street, London W1.

HILARY FINCH

**FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE**

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

**NEW RELEASES**

**BELOVED** (15): Oprah Winfrey is magnificently commanding as a runaway slave harassed by police, Lynch mobs, and a dead daughter. Jonathan Demme fails, however, to get inside the hawt heart of Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize winner.

**FESTEN** (15): Thomas Vinterberg's biting black Danish farce features a blind, deaf old man who falls through his hand-camera, it manages to look spontaneous, giddy and deliciously voyeuristic.

**KINI & ADAMIS (NFT):** Idrissa Ouédraogo's African buddy movie is a mostly enchanting parable about two friends who share a dream but fall out over money.

**THE 39 STEPS** (U): Hitchcock's witty mystery of a man (Robert Donat) smooth boozing his way across Scotland pursued by scamping police and ruthless spies.

**CURRENT** (15): The Thin Red Line is a glittering cast of American soldiers lose their sanity in the South Pacific.

during the Second World War. With Sean Penn and Nick Nolte.

**YOU'VE GOT MAIL** (PG): Baller-proof romantic blockbuster with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan as a woman on the Internet.

**TITANIC** (15): Jack Palance cuts as a philistine Gothic householder in this grim review of Northern Ireland's Troubles circa 1972. Roger Michell directs.

**URBAN LEGEND** (18): Dire James Blanks' horry flick that sneaks through an American campus with the help of a migraine-inducing orchestra.

**AFFLCTION** (15): Paul Schrader's bruising portrait of a frustrated small-town cop (Nick Nolte) and James Coburn as his kindly father, an affable old man caught in a cycle of male violence.

**THE 100 YEARS' LOVE** (18): David Kond's buzzy comedy charts the mess at Camden Town milits make of their love lives among the junk stalls.

**SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE** (15): Romantic comedy with a cracking cast by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard. Gwyneth Paltrow excels as the Bard's cross-dressing muse.

**THEATRES**

GILDED (0171-309 1701)

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LITTLE MALCOLM

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MON-SAT 8.30pm, Sun 8.45pm

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999

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THE TIMES

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**STAR PRIZE** The manager with the top score on our fantasy leaderboard after the final race of the season will win a £41,000 TVR Cerbera, plus a VIP trip for two to one of next season's grands prix.

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**3RD PRIZE** £5,000 plus a pair of four-day passes to the 2000 British Grand Prix.

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## THE SCORING SYSTEM

**DRIVERS** For each lap completed: 1 point. **Finishing position:** 1st 60 points; 2nd 50; 3rd 40; 4th 30; 5th 25; 6th 20; 7th 17; 8th 26; 9th 25; 10th 24; 11th 23; 12th 22; 13th 21; 14th 20; 15th 19; 16th 18; 17th 17; 18th 16; 19th 15; 20th 14. **Qualifying position:** Pole 30 points; 2nd 25; 3rd 24; 4th 23; 5th 22; 6th 21; 7th 20; 8th 19; 9th 18; 10th 17; 11th 16; 12th 15; 13th 14; 14th 13; 15th 12; 16th 11; 17th 10; 18th 9; 19th 8; 20th 7. **Improvement** from starting grid to finishing position: 3 points per place improved. **Fastest lap:** 10 points. **Penalty points:** Any incident resulting in a driver being made to start from the back of the grid or pit lane -10 points. Any incident resulting in elimination during a race -10 points. Not starting after qualifying for a race -10 points. Speeding in pit lane -5 points. Black flag -20 points.

**CONSTRUCTORS** **Finishing position** (first car only): 1st 30 points; 2nd 25; 3rd 24; 4th 22; 5th 22; 6th 21; 7th 20; 8th 18; 9th 17; 10th 16; 11th 15; 12th 14; 13th 13; 14th 12; 15th 11; 16th 10; 17th 9; 18th 8; 19th 7. **Penalty points:** Any incident resulting in a car being made to start from the back of the grid or pit lane -10 points. Any incident resulting in elimination during a race -10 points. Not starting after qualifying for a race -10 points. Speeding in pit lane -5 points.

**BONUS POINTS** apply to six grands prix during the 1999 Formula One championship, the first of which is the Brazilian Grand Prix. **Correctly predicting winning driver:** 100 points; second place: 200 points; third place: 300 points.

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## MAKE THREE SELECTIONS FROM EACH OF THE FOUR GROUPS BELOW



Damon Hill David Coulthard Mika Hakkinen Michael Schumacher Eddie Irvine

## DRIVERS

## GROUP A

- 1. Eddie Irvine
- 2. Mika Salo
- 3. Pedro Diniz
- 4. Johnny Herbert

## GROUP B

- 5. Heinz-Harald Frentzen
- 6. Rubens Barrichello
- 7. Pedro Diniz
- 8. Mika Salo
- 9. Pedro de la Rosa
- 10. Riccardo Zonta
- 11. Mika Häkkinen
- 12. Mika Häkkinen
- 13. Mika Häkkinen
- 14. Mika Häkkinen
- 15. Mika Häkkinen
- 16. Mika Häkkinen
- 17. Mika Häkkinen

## CONSTRUCTORS

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| • 1. McLaren  | • 2. Arrows   |
| • 3. Ferrari  | • 4. BAR      |
| • 5. Williams | • 6. Stewart  |
| • 7. Jordan   | • 8. Prost    |
| • 9. Benetton | • 10. Minardi |
| • 11. Sauber  |               |

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## GROUP A AND GROUP B DRIVERS

1st      2nd      3rd

## GROUP C AND GROUP D CONSTRUCTORS

1st      2nd      3rd

Team Name (maximum of 16 characters)

I have read and accept the rules and wish to enter the Fantasy Formula One game.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Carol Price presents a two-page special report on the annual canine event billed as 'the largest celebration of dogs in the world'



Groomed for perfection: Yorkshire terrier Justin, a Best in Show winner, with Osman Samiye

Over the next four days at the Birmingham National Exhibition Centre (NEC), about 110,000 visitors, from both home and abroad, will be flooding into Crufts to witness dog showing at its highest and most prestigious level.

Outside a hairdressers' convention, it is unlikely that they will ever see more collective snipping, teasing, prinking and bootfanning in their lives as more than 20,000 dogs are groomed to competitive perfection.

Not everyone who visits Crufts will begin to understand the finer mysteries and requirements of the show ring. But what they will soon discover is that, far from being a quaint and cosy pursuit dominated by retired colonels and marmos from the shires, modern dog shows — and in particular their commercial spin-offs, such as canine foods, accessories, books and grooming products — are now extremely big business.

Indeed, it is commonly, but erroneously, said that modern dog breeders and exhibitors are now "only in it for the money". But in truth, although any dog winning a top show title will increase its stud value overnight, there is really no big money in dog showing itself. Even the highest award in all dogdom — Supreme Champion at Crufts — carries a winner's cheque of just £100.

Today's keenest dog exhibi-

tor is just as likely to be a bus driver from Blackpool or a secretary from Sidcup.

What drives most dog-show enthusiasts is just sheer personal ambition. They are like gamblers, always hoping that the next show is going to be the one where they get a prestigious big win to make up for past disappointments.

This is what keeps them hammering up and down the motorway network most weekends, aiming for vital placings

at regional shows that will be their passport to Crufts and fulfil fantasies of future glory.

So, while the Kennel Club modestly bills Crufts as "the largest celebration of dogs on earth", equally it is a celebration of uncrushable hope and endurance. The ability of enthusiasts to keep travelling, prinking and parading, day after day, even when they know only 5 to 10 per cent of all pedigree dogs bred ever have show potential, is legendary.

In America plastic surgery to improve a dog's appearance is not uncommon, but is banned in all show circles.

Such odds can make competition fierce and give rise to the temptation to enhance cosmetically a dog's natural assets, in the manner of Hollywood starlets a few characteristics short of visual perfection.

In America plastic surgery to improve a dog's appearance is not uncommon, but is banned in all show circles.

However, what exhibitors are not supposed to do, but do regardless, is the reason the Kennel Club has warned

Crufts competitors this year that it will enforce random coat-testing for any form of dye or colourant, meaning disqualification for the guilty.

After 108 years, Crufts continues to get bigger and bigger, now comprising around 350 trade stands and a wealth of different canine displays on top of the customary show-ring breed competitions.

Sometimes you feel only the very fittest could survive four days trudging round the whole of Crufts: 250,000sq ft of collars and leads, coats, books, ornaments, grooming paraphernalia, bedding, pet food, outdoor clothing and veterinary products, occasionally broken up by spectacles of dogs doing everything from herding ducks to hanging off the shoulders of policemen on motorcycles.

Many Crufts old hands now criticise the event for "becoming more of a trade fair than a dog show", without perhaps realising how the latter might not have survived without the former, and that a spectacle that costs the Kennel Club £2.3 million to stage has to be paid for somehow.

Undoubtedly, after more than 100 years, much about Crufts has changed. But it is still the only dog show known throughout the world, and the only one that can turn a good dog into a great one overnight.

For last minute Crufts tickets this show runs March 11-14, contact the NEC box office: 0121-707 4852.

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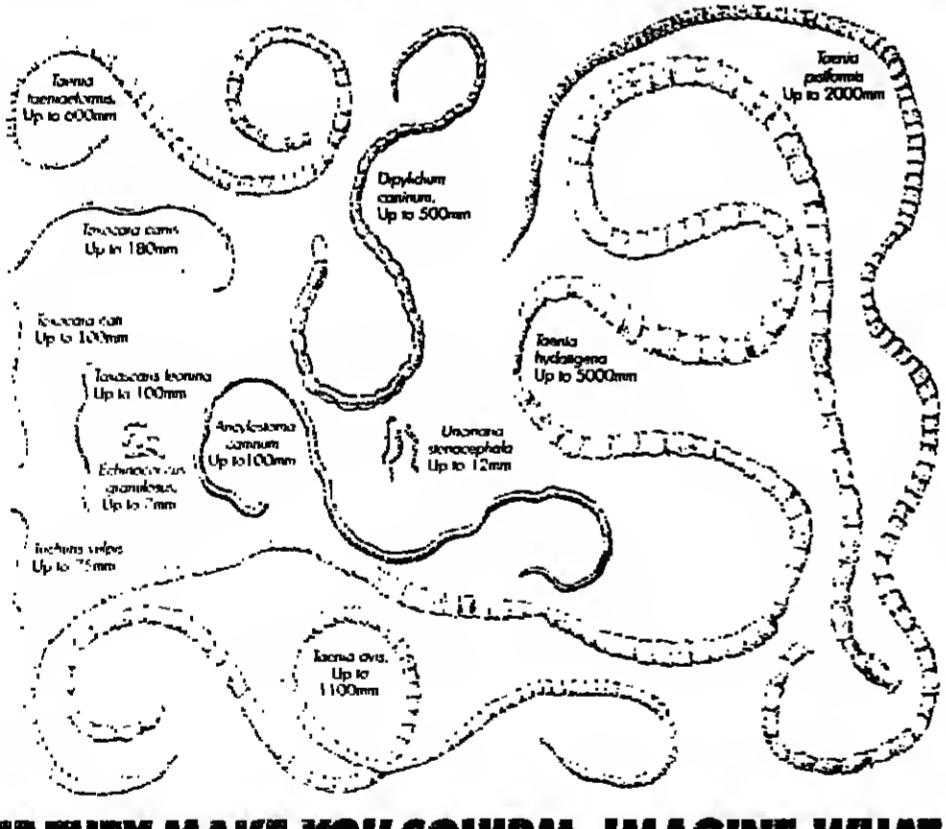
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# Wolves in designer clothing

The number of different pedigree dog breeds officially recognised in Britain today tops 160 and keeps growing. On a cursory trip around Crufts, however, you could be forgiven for thinking that many of them have come from different planets — such as the peculiar Mexican hairless dog or the wrinkly-skinned oriental shar-pei — let alone gene pools, writes *Carol Price*.

gene pool," writes Carol Price. But you would be wrong. Unbelievable as it may sometimes seem, all modern pedigree dogs share their genetic ancestry with just one original species — the wolf. And what you now see as amazing diversity and variety among them is just what happens when you take one basic genetic design and manipulate, mutate and modify it over thousands of years.

Over the years, however, what man has wanted from dogs has kept changing as he dithered between function and fashion. Virtually every pedigree breed was originally evolved for a particular working purpose, be it guarding, hunting, retrieving or herding livestock. But then the novelty of keeping dogs as pets or status symbols took off, and people became more obsessed

The end result is that the origins and early functions even of this country's most popular pedigree breeds — see the top ten dogs' table above — can be unknown to their owners.

unknown to their owners.

How many might realise, for instance, that the Yorkshire terrier was initially a much bigger dog bred to keep Northern mills clear of rats; that the boxer was primarily a hunting and

the boxer was primarily a hunting and



## TOP TEN BREEDS

- out 162 different pedigree breeds will be competing at Crufts, the largest entry being golden retrievers (500) and the second Hungarian kivász (3). Britain's top ten are:  
 • Lhasa apso  
 • German shepherd  
 • West Highland white terrier  
 • Golden retriever  
 • Cocker spaniel  
 • English springer spaniel  
 • Cavalier King Charles spaniel  
 • Boxer  
 • Staffordshire bull terrier  
 • Yorkshire terrier

Billy, right, and Ali represent the grand bassett griffon vendéen breed which last year, for the first time at Crufts, had its own breed classes

fighting dog dating back to Middle Ages Bavaria or that the labrador is a relatively recent import from North America originally developed by Newfoundland seamen to carry useful items back and forth between ship and

Sometimes the worst thing that can happen to any pedigree breed is that it suddenly becomes fashionable and gains a wide appeal. A wide appeal means it will be overbred — not always by the most scrupulous people —

It will also tend to be owned by many people who have acquired it as

many people who have acquired it on

make them more extreme, in the worst cases to the detriment of a breed's overall health and physical viability.

A classic example of this is the traditional English bulldog. It was originally a mastiff type bred centuries ago for bull baiting, with a broad head and undershot jaw, enabling it to breathe well while gripping bulls tightly by the nose with its teeth.

Today's bulldogs bear only a small resemblance to the specimens of old. Exaggeration of facial features means they can be beset by breathing difficulties and their heads have become so large that now many bulldog bitches can only give birth by Caesarean section.

Growing unease, however, about such man-made problems and the genetic price — in terms of health defects — means much is now changing in the modern dog-breeding world, at least at its highest and most scrupulous levels.

Many pedigree varieties have paid for past preoccupations with fashionable or "standard" looks. Breeders are now more focused on maintaining

now more focused on constitutional soundness, aided by technology that enables dogs to be screened for genetic defects ranging from malformed hips to

Arguably, being fashionable rather than functional is something most pedigree dogs might prefer not to be. Not that the feelings of the dogs themselves

• The author is a socialist, argues

- The author is a specialist canine writer and author of Understanding The Border Collie: An Essential Pet Owner's Guide, just published by Broadcast Books (0117-973 2010).



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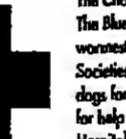
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## TENNIS

# Hingis gives Schnyder harsh lesson

FROM ALICE RAMSAY IN INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA

WHICHEVER way you choose to look at it, no amount of gurus, diets and alternative therapies can bridge the huge gap between the aspiring hopeful and the established champion. In the early hours of yesterday morning, Martina Hingis taught Patty Schnyder a sharp lesson in how to win a tennis match as she cruised into the quarter-finals of the Evert Cup with a 6-1, 6-3 triumph.

It may have been Schnyder's best performance of the week — the others verged on the poor — but that hardly made up for the result.

Hingis is looking good. She has rediscovered her appetite for competition, is fit and fast and, with one grand-slam title in the bag and the world No 1 ranking back in her possession, she has her eyes set on a raft of titles this year.

"She was reacting really well, she was reading my game, she knew where I was playing," Schnyder said. She should have expected no less. "This is my strength, this is my weapon on the court, this is why I am No 1," Hingis explained.

It took just a few games before Hingis got the measure of Schnyder. They had met only twice, Schnyder winning in Munich in September when Hingis defaulted, injured, in the third set, and again in New York two months later when Hingis got her own back. Both times it was close, but yesterday the result was never in doubt. Long rallies tested the water before Hingis began to apply the pressure. At the merest hint of aggression, Schnyder wilted, mixing stunning winners with some appalling errors. At least it was quick.

Accompanied, as always these days, by Rainer Harnecker, her boyfriend and adviser, Schnyder seemed relieved that it was all over. "She was more confident and I was less confident," was her explanation for the loss.

The lack of belief came, she thought, from the media attention focused on her private life

and off-court training methods. "I could not work quietly on my own," she said. Much has been made of her new diet and the two to three litres of orange juice that she drinks every day.

This caused Harnecker to perk up and ask the WTA Tour official to stop such a line of questioning — to no avail. Only when Schnyder deflected all inquiries with a swift "If it didn't work I wouldn't try it" did he calm down.

To judge by their working relationship on court, all is not sweetness and light in the Schnyder camp. Having fired her latest coach last Thursday, she is now practising under the watchful eye of Harnecker, who has no background in tennis. More than once Schnyder — who, with five titles last year and one in 1999, knows something about the game — has given Harnecker short shrift as he has tried to make changes and suggestions. As they prepare for the Lipton Championships, she is leaving open the question of a new coach. "I'll just see what is going to happen," she said.

Hingis knows exactly what is going to happen next. She faces Chanda Rubin, who knocked out Aranda Coetzer, the No 7 seed, 6-4, 6-4. She

was not the only seed to fall as Sandrine Testud, seeded No 12, defeated Nathalie Tauziat, the Wimbledon finalist last year and No 8 seed, 7-6, 6-2 in an all-French affair.

In the Newsweek Champions' Cup, Thomas Enqvist, the Australian Open finalist and No 13 seed, fell at the first hurdle, losing to Marat Safin 6-4, 6-4. Andre Agassi never made it that far, forced to withdraw when the hamstring injury that he sustained in Scottsdale last Saturday proved no sign of healing quickly.

Tommy Haas could sympathise. He strained an upper-back muscle during his match with Hicham Arazi and had to withdraw at 5-5 in the first set. That put Arazi through to meet Tim Henman in the early hours of this morning.

For years, it was considered unacceptable for females to take part in traditional male activities such as football and basketball. Hockey, however, has been played by both sexes for more than a century. Still, the pace of the boys' game has usually made it too vigorous for a female to be able to play alongside teenage males.

Enter Wendy Owen, who in this term has been a regular in the Kimbolton boys' first XI after last term leading the girls' team to the Eastern region finals.

David Elstone, the master-in-charge of hockey at the independent school in Cambridgeshire, has had to warn opposing schools that the Wales under-18 girls' triallist would be in the boys' team.

"No one has objected," he said. "They had probably thought that it would be to their advantage. However, after the game has started,

they think 'well, hang on, she's good.' Everyone has commented how talented she is. It's not a gimmick, she's in the first team because she deserves it."

Although the first team is an unusually young one and has been handicapped by injuries, Wendy, 17, has earned her place on merit in a coeducational school of 559 senior pupils where hockey is the main boys' sport this term.

Elstone said: "If I thought there would have been a safety issue I would not have picked her. I talked extensively to her parents and also to our headmaster who just said 'Why not?'

Wendy began playing mixed hockey at the age of 9, in her family garden with her father, a former player at

Somtgate, and her brother, Hugh, who recently represented the West under-21 team. She progressed to being joint captain of Cambridgeshire at under-17 level and a member of the Eastern region development squad. She has played largely as a sweeper where her reading of the

## John Goodbody meets a teenager breaking new ground



Bully for me: Wendy Owen, of Kimbolton School, Cambridgeshire, who plays first XI hockey — for both the girls' and the boys' team

## Girl hockey star who moves in boys' circles

### SPORT IN SCHOOLS

and of course you get comments and looks from some of them. There are also comments from the touchline but generally it's been fine."

Elstone says that her chief talent is that she does not get frustrated and marshals the centre of defence to such effect that the Kimbolton girls' team only conceded five goals in regular inter-school matches last term.

Wendy began playing hockey with the boys at Kimbolton at the age of 15. It is the main sport for girls before Christmas, after which they concentrate on netball, whereas boys play football in the autumn and then switch to hockey in the new year. This arrangement has allowed her to represent both teams.

She says: "It's great fun. When I started there was an attitude of 'What are you doing here?' But after a while they got used to me playing and now it is completely accepted."

But is it accepted by the other boys' schools? "I was really nervous the first time

## SNOOKER

## Burnett allows Higgins to escape

FROM PHIL YATES  
IN SHANGHAI

JAMIE BURNETT squandered a gilt-edged opportunity to record the most notable victory of his career when he was beaten 5-4 by John Higgins, the world No 1, in the first round of the China International here last night.

Burnett, who cleared to pink in the seventh frame after gaining a fluked snooker on the last red, led 4-3 and 36-19 in the eighth. While occupying prime scoring territory, though, he missed a straightforward red and Higgins drew level thanks to a 61 break and comfortably added the decider with a well-crafted 111.

"At one point I was sitting there thinking that I'd be going home," Higgins said. "I told myself to stop feeling like that because the likes of Steve Davis and Stephen Hendry would never have been so negative in the same situation when they were top of the rankings."

"That made me fight harder but I still can't believe Jamie gave me a lifeline when he did. Who knows, after surviving something like that, my name could be on the trophy come Sunday."

Like Higgins, John Parrott faced unexpected elimination when, from 3-1 ahead, he trailed Dave Finbow 4-3, but the 1991 world champion constructed half-century breaks in each of the closing two frames for a 5-4 victory, while his little-known opponent failed to pot a ball.

Hendry, handicapped by a badly flaking cue-tip that increasingly limited his shot-making capabilities, held just enough in reserve to beat Anthony Davies 5-2 and now meets Davis, his old adversary, who defeated Quinten Hamm, of Australia, 5-1.

Ken Doherty produced the most impressive performance of the round, producing breaks of 115 and 129 in consecutive frames in his 5-0 whitewash of Michael Holt. However, not all members of the top 16 in the world rankings were successful.

Alain Robidoux, of Canada, lost 5-0 to Matthew Stevens and James Wattana was beaten 5-3 by Billy Snaddon.

SCHOOL'S CAMPAIGN THE TIMES

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**SEE THE BACK PAGE OF SECTION ONE FOR TODAY'S TOKEN**

CHANGING TIMES

### SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

This hand from the Macallan Pairs demonstrates that some "equal" cards are more equal than others.

Dealer South N-S game IMPs

♦ KQ9	♦ 1078	♦ K103	♦ AQJ942	+ 2
♥ A865	♥ Q102	♥ 108553		
♦ 07				
♦ AJ965				
			♦ 542	♦ 743
			♥ K2	
			♦ 108553	
	♦ AJ58	♦ J974	♦ K	
			♦ KQ105	

Contract: Three No-Trumps by South. Lead: queen of spades.

Declarer took the ace of spades, unblocked the diamond king and led a heart towards dummy. West played low. It is hardly obvious why declarer should prefer to play one honour rather than the other from dummy on this trick, and in practice Townsend played the ten which lost to the king. East returned a spade, ducked to the ten, and declarer cashed a top diamond, getting the bad news, then cleared the spades. This left the following cards:

♦ —	♦ 98	♦ 2	♦ 1086
♦ A865	♦ QJ94	♦ 2	♦ 743
♦ —			
♦ AJ965			

## WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

## ACAROLOGIST

- a. A person without a care
- b. Collector of bottle-tops
- c. Student of mites

## FRAG

- a. A piece of mosaic
- b. A new boy at Harrow
- c. To explode one's superior

## CREPIS

- a. A garden trellis
- b. A plant
- c. Part of a shoe

## BORBORYGMIC

- a. In the ocean depths
- b. A rhythmic metre
- c. With rumbling stomach

Answers on page 54

### KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

## Runners-up

With Kasparov having already clinched victory in the elite tournament at Linares in Spain, interest now centres on the runner-up.

The race is between Vladimir Kramnik, the Russian grandmaster, and Viswanathan Anand, the Indian grandmaster. The winner of the second prize may well be the favourite, now that Kasparov's projected match with Shirov has fallen through, to challenge Kasparov in a world title match later this year. Here are samples of the two comanders from Linares.

White: Vladimir Kramnik

Black: Peter Svidler

Linares 1999

## Grunfeld Defence

1	d4	Nf6	g5
2	e5	Be6	h5
3	Nc3	g6	g5
4	f4	Bg7	h4
5	Ng2	Ne5	h3
6	Ng2	Ne6	h2
7	Nf4	c5	h1
8	h3	Qd5	g1
9	h4	Qe5	g2
10	h5	Nc6	g3
11	h6	a6	g4
12	h6+	b5	g5
13	h5	Na5	g6
14	Nh3	g6	g4
15	h4	Qd5	g5
16	g5	Qe5	g6
17	c3	Qd5	g7
18	Qd5	Qe5	g6
19	Qe5	Qd5	g5
20	Qd5	Qe5	g4
21	Qe5	Qd5	g3
22	Qd5	Qe5	g2
23	Qe5	Qd5	g1
24	Qd5	Rg3	g2
25	Qe4	Rg2	g3
26	Qd3	Qe5	g4
27	Qe4	Qd5	g5
28	Qd5	Qe5	g6
29	Qe7	Rg7	g7
30	Qd4	Rg6	g6
31	Qe3	Rg5	g5
32	Qd5	Rg4	g4
33	Qe5		

## EQUESTRIANISM

## Award for Bartle completes fine year

By JENNY MACARTHUR

CHRIS BARTLE, the winner of Badminton last year, on Adrian 'Cantwell's' Word Perfect II, and one of the leading horse trials contenders for the Sydney Olympic Games, was presented with the Spillers National Personality of the Year award at the Knightsbridge Barracks in London yesterday.

Bartle's win last May was memorable on several counts. He was the first British winner of Badminton since 1993; at 46 he was also the oldest. He was also the only winner to have originally made his name in dressage, rather than horse trials.

His sixth place at the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 1984, on Wily Trout, remains the highest British placing in an Olympic equestrian event.

The award — voted for by readers of *Horse & Rider* and *Pony* magazines — completes a frenetic 12 months for Bartle. In addition to his commitments as managing director of the Yorkshire Riding Centre, and dressage trainer to the Great Britain team, he is increasingly in demand to take clinics, both here and abroad. He has recently returned from a six-week stint in Australia. But he relishes his new life. "Everyone dreams about winning Badminton — even now I sometimes have to pinch myself to remind myself it happened," he said.

He is hoping it may happen again. Although Word Perfect, his Olympic prospect, is resting this year, after advice from Andy Baile, the Britain team vet, and will compete in only a few one-day horse trials in the autumn, Bartle is riding Oscar, his second horse, at Badminton this year. In September, at a rain-soaked Burghley, the 10-year-old slipped up at the Dragon Fence early on the course, but Bartle is happy. "He's a very bold, powerful horse and it's just a matter of organising him," he said.

Other awards yesterday went to Monty Roberts, who was voted the International Personality of the Year for his contribution to horse welfare, and to Rosemary Hobson, a veterinary surgeon, who received the Spillers Diamond award. The Horse of the Year award went to One Man, the top steeplechaser for 1995-96 and 1996-97, whose brilliant career was cut short by his tragic death last year at the age of 10. Karen Dixon, a member of the bronze medal-winning team at the world three-day event championships in Rome last September, gave birth to a son yesterday.

## TODAY'S FIXTURES

## FOOTBALL

Kick-off 7.30 unless stated

FA Cup

Sixth-round replay

Chelsea v Manchester Utd (7.45)

FA Cup

Blackburn v Everton (7.45)

Derby v Arsenal (7.45)

Leeds v Tottenham (7.45)

Nottingham Forest v Newcastle (7.45)

National League

Second division

Stoke v Reading (7.45)

Scottish League

First division

Clydebank v Falkirk

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Midland division: Newport A/F C/Pages R (7.45), Solihull Brough v Blackpool, VS Rugby v RC Worcester

UNIFORM LEAGUE: Challenge Cup: Third round: Huddersfield v Allerton

RYMAN LEAGUE: First division: Moseley vs. Luton

AVON INSURANCE: COMBINATION:

First division: Newchapel v Matlock (at Colne Training Ground) 2.0, Cheltenham v Gloucester (2.0), Cheltenham v Gloucester (2.0), Cheltenham v Bridgnorth (2.0), Nottingham v Matlock (2.0); Queens Park Rangers v Luton (2.0), Tottenham v Swindon, Wimborne (2.0), Yeovil v Yeovil Town (2.0)

PONTINS' LEAGUE: Premier division: Aston Villa v Blackburn, First division: Port Vale v Wrexham (7.0), Tranmere v Bury (7.0), Shrewsbury Town v Luton (7.0), Wrexham v Huddersfield (2.0), Third division: Ayr United v Wigton (2.0), Vauxhall (2.0), Larkhall (2.0), Cheltenham (2.0), Dagenham v Bradford (2.0); Stockport v York (7.0).

LEAGUE OF WALES: Abertillery v Carmarthen (2.0), Caerphilly v Llanelli (7.0), Conwy v Holyhead, Denbigh v Rhyl, Ffestiniog v Rhayader

SCHWEPPE'S ESSO SENIOR LEAGUE: Premier division: United East v East Ham, Elm Manor (2.0)

COMPLETE MUSIC: HELLENIC LEAGUE: Premier division: Cheltenham v Carterton, Tiverton v Andover (2.0)

WINSTON-KELK LEAGUE: Premier division: Croy v Croxwell

SCREWFOX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier division: Yate (TR) v Bridgwater (4.0)

SILVER LEAGUE: SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE: Premier division: Ashford v Wellington Borough (8.0), Wellingborough (8.0), Northamptonshire (8.0), Peterborough (8.0)

HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Caledonian v Forces Mechanics, Keith v Rothes, Peterhead v Cowdenbeath

ESTATE COUNTRIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Stamford v Sudbury (7.45)

JEMISON WESEX LEAGUE CUP: Semi-final, first leg: Cowes Sports v Eastleigh (2.0)

UNION COUNTY LEAGUE: First division: Poole (2.0), Poole (2.0)

UNISET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE: First division: Hastings v Redhill, John O'Groats (2.0), Seaford (2.0)

NORTHUMBERLANDS EAST LEAGUE: Premier division: Hartlepool (2.0)

OTHER SPORT

BADMINTON: All-England championships in Birmingham (2.0)

BASKETBALL: Bude (2.0)

Darts (2.0)

HOCKEY: Men's representative match between England and Scotland (2.0)

RUGBY UNION: All-Ireland Second division: Dungannon v Derry (7.0)

## Carl Evans on an amateur rider forecasting Cheltenham glory for his former partner Pollock adds more grit to Teeton Mill

**T**eeton Mill's impressive strides to the head of the British steeplechasing scene have not erased all doubts about his chances of winning the Cheltenham Gold Cup next week.

His stamina and robustness are subjects of debate, but few question his jumping, which has been professional, energy saving and efficient. It seems odd that in his first four races as a pointer he unseated his rider and fell twice.

That he has since run 14 times without mishap is due in part to a conversation between an Aintree history-maker and a callow amateur rider who

RICHARD EVANS

past the others. After that he kept winning and his jumping got better and better.

Pollock is not surprised by Teeton Mill's progress this year, pointing out that form ground in recent seasons, and a virus last year, were factors which kept the grey's talents under cover. He is optimistic his old partner will triumph next week, despite those stinging doubts.

"You can pick holes in his form but I don't think he'll get beaten because he doesn't get the trip," Pollock said. "He's won over the distance, and further, and is ideally suited to soft ground. What we don't know is whether he'll be able to win his race by a surge four or five fences out. That's how he has been winning this season, but what will happen



Pollock and Teeton Mill, successful eight times in points

now works as a farrier. Dick Saunders, Teeton Mill's former owner and the oldest man to ride a Grand National winner — he was 48 when successful in 1982 on Grifit — and Ben Pollock, who recorded eight successive victories on the grey, spend a lot of time analysing horses and races.

Pollock was 21 when he took over from Trevor Marks and first rode Teeton Mill in public at the start of the horse's second season. He recalls: "We were 50 lengths clear in a point-to-point at Southwell, when he tipped up three from home, so the guy [Saunders] and I tried to work out why the horse kept falling."

We reckoned it was lack of concentration. He had such a high cruising speed and his jumping was, perversely, so good, that he found it all so easy. We decided to drop him out and make him work to get

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Champion ready to risk all to unify division and prove he is heavyweight king of the world

# Gladiators in search for high ground

FROM ROB HUGHES, CHIEF SPORTS WRITER, IN NEW YORK

DOWNTOWN Manhattan the morning after Joe DiMaggio has died: the city of New York is in respectful mourning for the baseball icon and with all the money, all the hype, even all the quasi-religious talk surrounding the undisputed world heavyweight fight between Evander Holyfield and Lennox Lewis on Saturday, the one thing for certain is that both men, both warriors, would settle for just a fraction of the deep and genuine respect that is felt here for DiMaggio.

So as Holyfield arrives at the aptly-named Church Street Boxing Gym, as he saunters relaxed and ready through the throng in his workshop of 400 journalists and television crews, have no doubt that beneath the exterior beats the heart of a man who, with \$10 million (about £94 million) in the bank, and little of it squandered, the respect and the glory is paramount.

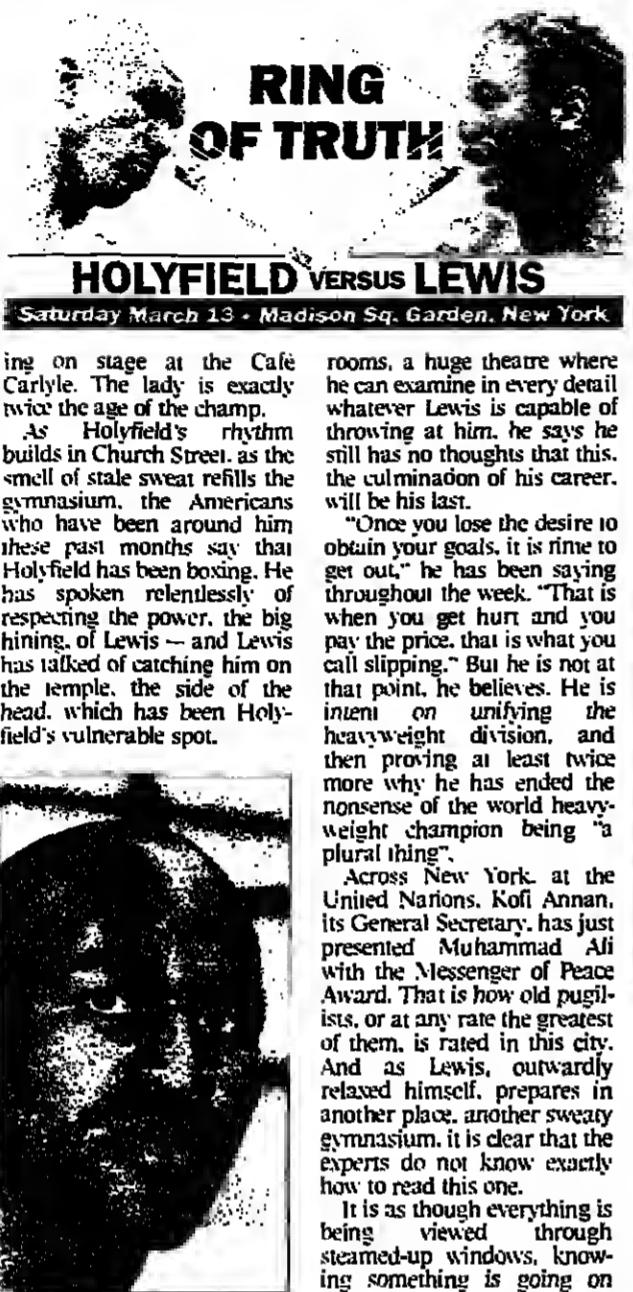
"Train at your own risk," reads the final warning on a blood-red sign inside the spacious gymnasium which, typically, is an underground converted warehouse. On the walls are splendidly lifelike charcoal drawings of Jack Dempsey and Joe Louis, and on Holyfield's back is a blonde masseuse. She begins kneading the shoulders, which look as if they are hewn out of black marble. He is rolling the neck muscles, savoring the photographers who, few by few, are led into a back room for their allotted glimpse of the senior warrior.

"You know, Lewis has a real chance," Tony Signore, himself a New Yorker, a former habilleur of the gym where Holyfield began, said. "Your man [Lewis] has so much power and, sooner or later, someone is going to take advantage of the fact that Holyfield is at the end."

"It's not age [Holyfield is a well-preserved 30], it's the wars, the mileage. Up to your twentieth fight, they put you in with pancakes. But I was right there when Holyfield had his first fight, it was a four-round war, and nothing's gotten any easier for him since."

However, he relishes boxing wars, this extraordinary champion Holyfield. He has twice intimidated Mike Tyson, bullied the most fearsome bully in the fight game. He has had a heart scare that would have terminated the desire of 99 out of a hundred boxers, especially those living with a doctor for a wife and living in such opulent luxury.

It is not about age, Signore said. If it was, then Holyfield could look across New York to Madison Avenue on 76th Street, where this week, and at the same hour on the same night as he will be doing business in Madison Square Garden, Eartha Kin is pur-



**'Holyfield still has no thoughts that this will be his last'**

Yet he has not trained not against bulk, but against smaller, lighter, swifter opponents. Speed, he reasons silently, could be of the essence. It will be his speed at getting inside the appreciably longer reach of Holyfield that could determine who is come Sunday morning, the undisputed heavyweight king of the world.

When Holyfield speaks, it is neither with the air of the preacher man that he has been labelled nor with any apparent concern for what is to come. He has been defending himself, and attacking opponents from the age of eight, and if he now lives in a mansion that has 17 bath-

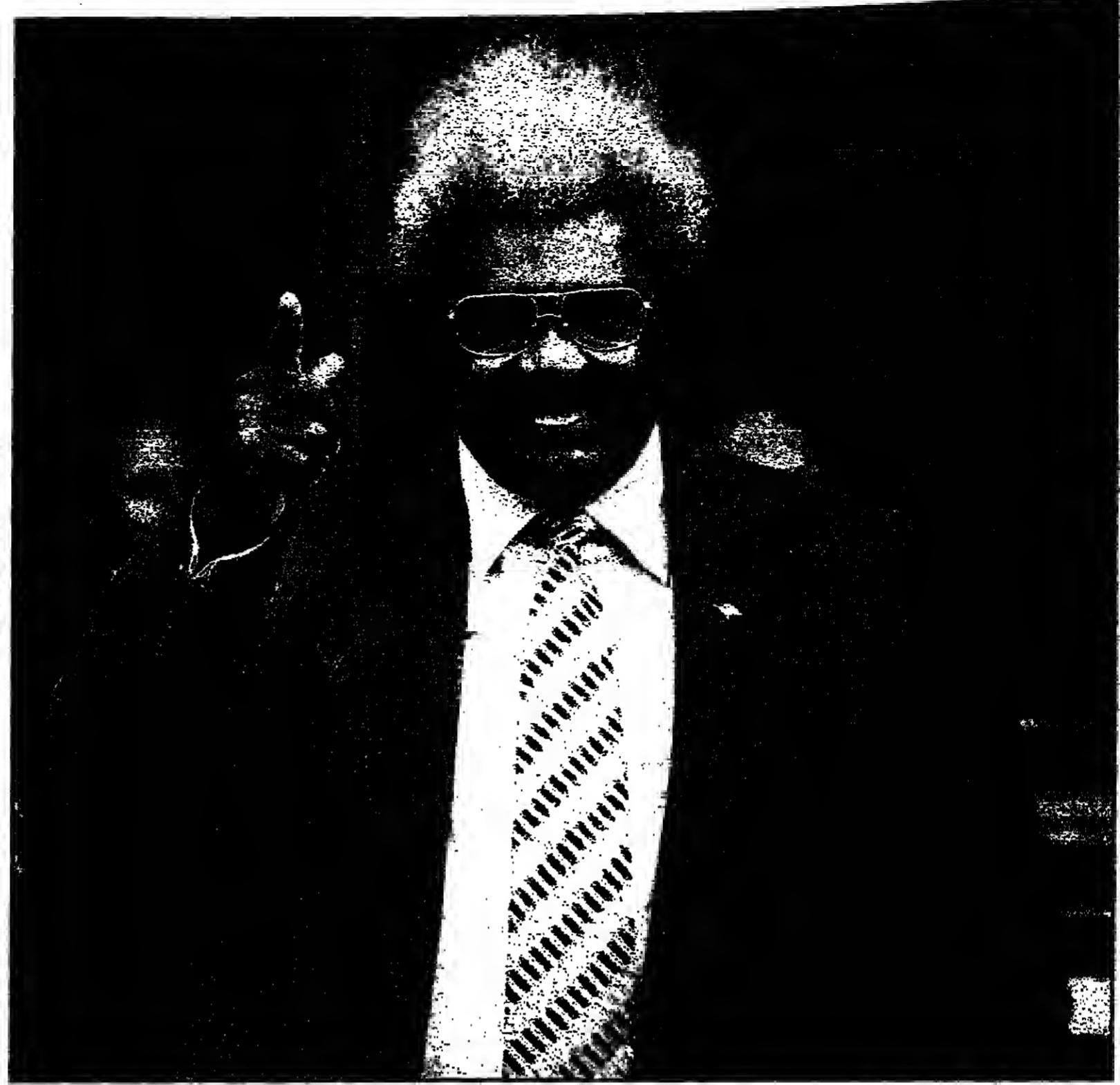
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receives value for money from personnel who, in effect, are paid twice. While aware of the positive publicity the stars generate, our man on the ramparts in Whitehall says: "In recent years we have recognised the increasing amount of time and money involved in sport. Rugby union is the best illustration, so we are looking at current policy to make sure it is fair both to servicemen and taxpayer."

#### Defence review

The Ministry of Defence has begun a review of the roles played by its professional sports stars, who include high profile names from the world of rugby such as Tim Rodber and Spencer Brown. In these cost-conscious days the Government is wondering whether it



Get my point: King, outside the US Federal Court, is still shouting the odds for the world heavyweight title bout despite his brushes with the law

## King's fighting talk rings out loud

Lynne Truss is tempted to turn down the volume as the promoter holds court at Madison Square Garden

**T**hey may not know it in Kosovo, but according to Don King, both the Serbs and the ethnic Albanians have agreed a ceasefire for Saturday night. The Holyfield-Lewis bout is that important. "Do you know what? They are calling a moratorium in Kosovo and Bosnia!" he bellows at alarmingly close quarters in Madison Square Garden's small auditorium — empty save for an unused boxing ring, a few desks and phones and a film crew waiting for an interview.

"How's that again?" one is tempted to josh. "You couldn't speak up, could you?" "I SAID TO THEM," he continues. "I said to them, they got to call a moratorium and watch the King's Crowning Glory. Naïf couldn't do it, but Don King can do it."

"I got Bosnian Then, if they die, they can die happy because they saw the fight of the millennium, and, if they survive, they'll have something to tell their kids!"

Since King looks like someone freshly emerged from a wind tunnel, I suppose it's fair enough that the only way to measure his personal impact is by reference to the Beaufort scale. An enormous, portly, grizzled African-American,

flashing an oblong of diamonds on his finger the size of a mouse mat, he speaks at a volume that causes small buildings to fall over and helicopter pilots to wrestle, panicking, with the controls. If you are standing two feet in front of him, all your hair streaks out backwards, so that you end up looking precisely like him. I was wondering when the hyperbole for the unification contest would start, and now it certainly has.

"Remember CYRANO DE BERGERAC?" he demands, extravagantly. "Crossed enemy lines just to mail a letter to ROXANE," I nod, confused, wondering what Cyrano de Bergerac has to do with Holyfield. He will rise to it, but they cannot know and he cannot know. As we leave the gym of Holyfield, the symbol of a bag, redundant yet reddened by the pounding of gloves, suggests that in time this will be forgotten. For one gladiator that will not be the truth.

King looks like someone freshly emerged from a wind tunnel, I suppose it's fair enough that the only way to measure his personal impact is by reference to the Beaufort scale. An enormous, portly, grizzled African-American,

"We had the Boston Tea Party in 1776, now we've got the FIGHT OF THE MILLENNIUM in 1999." And you can argue with the historical grasp. One's only quibble with all this erudition is that for someone who claims to have spent such a lot of productive time in prison libraries, Don King is a relative stranger to the concept of keeping your voice down.

"I am duly astonished by King. Almighty nerve is a quality tragically underrated outside of boxing. I suddenly realised Hey, if you've got a decent word like 'hyperbole' in the language, shouldn't someone by rights embody it? To be honest, it has been a slight disappointment so far to discover that our two heavyweight champions are nice guys who

believe in the eloquence of digested silence. I mean, where's the fun in that? Obnoxious overstatement is what's required of boxers, surely?" Gary Richardson, of the BBC, asked Evander Holyfield in a little film on *Grandstand* last week. "Grandiose," Holyfield confided, with relish. It was a great moment, but it had been tremendous hard work getting it out.

King won't speculate on how many people are paying to watch the bout. He said you shouldn't "count your marbles" — an interesting image that suggests he might have lost some. But he does local radio interviews end-to-end down the telephone, assuring the people of Tampa, for example, that black-market tickets are selling in Manhattan for \$7,500 (about £4,700), and that if "they can't be on the scene, WATCH IT ON THE SCREEN!" it's not subtle. "But what exactly are you trying to get me to do, Don?" is something no one ever has to say. Not even in Red China, apparently, where he claims he's sold the contest: not even

in "all those Iron Curtain places", such as Russia, and certainly not in Tampa, where radio listeners are at present swerving off the road.

What a marvellous start in life that his name was King. I can't help thinking. Setting off down the same path with a name like Warren — dark turtlenecks, do I go right or left? Oh God, rabbit droppings everywhere, is tragic bad luck.

King seems to think he doesn't get enough credit for arranging this bout when he alone went out single-handed and slaughtered that wild boar and dragged it home and drew its fangs and tore its horns out. I can't think where he got that idea. This event is four times bigger than any event in the history of the Garden, he tells everyone, humbly submitting and bearing witness. It was sold out three months ahead. And we thank Britain for the Marquess of Queensberry, who brought order out of chaos.

"Will you do a little piece for us now?" the telly producer asks, when King pauses briefly for breath. "I'll do a BIG piece for you now," King says. And having simply swivelled on the spot, he just starts yelling in another direction.

## Look Sharp(e) for Iberian adventures

VERY few rugby players have a literary canon named after them. Richard Sharp, the former England fly half, capped 14 times between 1960-67, has that honour since his name has been borrowed for the successful Richard Sharpe novels of Bernard Cornwell, whose sixteenth book in the series has just been published. Cornwell could not come up with an appropriate name for his rifleman, who achieves least of daring during the Peninsula War, so in desperation, took the name of one of his favourite rugby players, added an e, and never looked back. He even exacted a form of revenge on the South Africa centre, Mannekes Roux, whose high tackle broke Sharp's cheekbone during the 1962 British Isles tour. Roux found his way into one of the novels as Colonel Leroix, Sharpe's sworn enemy, who meets a suitably grisly end.

#### Petal power

After years of trying, the Rugby Football Union has managed to register the Red Rose as a trademark, one which new Labour has hijacked for its own cause. Only one trouble. The original design had 15 petals

to signify a rugby team, the new design has only 11. Surely some mistake?

#### Tackle count

It features a line-up of buxom ladies, but it's a change from the usual glamour calendar and quite what *Playboy* boss Hugh Hefner would make of it is hard to say. Members of Newbury women's rugby club have posed for a millennium calendar to raise money for charity. A flick through reveals 12 of the side in various nude and semi-naked shots, some with only strategically placed rugby balls or tackle bags to hide their modesty. Bryony Clow, the captain and No 8, who is Miss December, said: "I could not believe how keen the girls were when it was suggested and I was quite shocked how far some of them would go." It's on sale now, so see for yourself.

#### Defence review

The Ministry of Defence has begun a review of the roles played by its professional sports stars, who include high profile names from the world of rugby such as Tim Rodber and Spencer Brown. In these cost-conscious days the Government is wondering whether it

along to Murrayfield where, for just £1, they will be allowed to score a try on the famous pitch. More entertaining still is the identity of the player who will launch the event. He is Roger Baird, a wing who failed to score a single try in 27 appearances between 1981 and 1988.

**Fight first**  
Hard to believe, but a photograph of Richard Cockerill on the front cover in the official RFU magazine, *Rugby 99*, has inspired a young Ghanaian to write to Twickenham for a pair of boots. Frederick Djabakor, 18, of the Shooting Stars club, has written to Dear Mr Peter (Trunkfield, the RFU president) explaining his predicament. He bought a "football boot for training" which "got spoilt" and his parents can't afford to replace it (sic). He wondered if Mr Peter could help, ending with this message: "May God bless your team to win all matches. PS: The size of the boot I wear is 12½ or 11." To be on the safe side, the RFU is sending two pairs and a signed England shirt.

**Wing wonder**  
The Scottish Rugby Union has come up with an entertaining wheeze to raise funds for Comic Relief's Red Nose Day. On Friday, youngsters will be able to go

MARK SOISTER

## Howley calls for WRU to mend fences with clubs

**ROBERT HOWLEY**  
By David Hands  
Rugby Correspondent

at arena. Wales's next game, after their breathless 34-33 win in Paris, will be the non-championship match against Italy in Treviso on March 20.

"The carrot for players then will be the chance to play against England, which everyone wants to do," Howley said. "I hope England will be going for a grand slam at Wembley on April 11, because that will leave us with some



Howley: plea for unity

say in the destiny of this year's championship. People have praised the game we played last weekend but I think England, with players like Jeremy Guscott and Jonny Wilkinson, can play an attacking game."

Howley will be one of a clutch of internationals attending the National Sevens, which will be celebrating its diamond jubilee at Roehampton from March 22 to 26. Around 6,500 players will take part in 882 matches and the 486 competing teams will include 24 girls' teams. The competition will be watched by seven survivors of the first final played in 1939, between St Georges, Harpenden and Clifton College.

Leicester are contemplating an appeal against the decision of a Rugby Football Union disciplinary panel to extend by five weeks the suspension of Austin Healey, their scrum half. Healey was found to have been reckless in stamping on Kevin Purt, the London Irish scrum half, but has already served a three-week ban imposed by Leicester: if an appeal is made, it could leave Healey available to play against Northampton on Saturday.

Sprints help O'Grady take lead

## CRICKET

# Road back looks hazardous for West Indies

FROM PAT GIBSON IN PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD

THE shockwaves were still reverberating around the Caribbean yesterday as the West Indies tried to come to terms with the worst disaster in their cricket history. They are used to earthquakes in these parts, but the collapse to 51 all out and defeat by 312 runs in the first Test against Australia was a tremor on an unprecedented scale.

All they can do now is pick up the pieces. They will present Shivnarine Chanderpaul, their most consistent batsman, who has now recovered from a shoulder injury, for the second Test starting in Jamaica on Saturday and hope to have Clive Hooper back for the third Test in Barbados.

These are only short term measures, however. The team that ruled the cricket world for 20 years will never recapture past glories unless and until the widely scattered powers that be get together to introduce a proper infrastructure.

"We should have seen this coming," Clive Lloyd, his moustache drooping as if in response to the calamity, said. "We cannot just keep selecting x and selecting y. All you are doing is digging a hole to fill a hole. What our cricket needs above all is a development programme so that all the different islands can sing from the same song sheet."

They are not singing at all these days. When Lloyd faced up to the last great crisis in 1976, when the West Indies were beaten 5-1 in Australia,

he had a wealth of talent at his disposal. There were batsmen like Gordon Greenidge, Desmond Haynes, Lawrence Rowe, Alvin Kallicharran, Viv Richards and Lloyd himself. Bating wicketkeepers in Deryck Murray and Jeff Dujon, and the all-rounders, Bernard Julien and Keith Boyce. Among the bowlers there were Andy Roberts and Michael Holding, Joel Garner, Lance Gibbs, and soon afterwards, Malcolm Marshall, Courtney Walsh and Curly Ambrose.

Brian Lara, who has been given two Tests to prove that he is the man to lead the West Indies out of their present stamp, does not have anybody as good. Walsh and Ambrose remain but they are becoming stumbling blocks to promising younger fast bowlers. Of promising young batsmen, there is little sign.

The reasons for the decline are well-documented. West Indies cricket was complacent, seemingly oblivious to the lure of American sports, especially baseball which seems to be on television all day, to their young athletes confident that the natural talent would keep coming through.

Now the well has dried up and they have no alternative but to start all over again, identify the best young players and give them time to develop. They may lose a few more Tests but they are losing anyway, ten of their past 14, including the last six in a row.

As Lloyd, now the team manager, said: "Australia had a slump when people were calling for Allan Border to resign but they put their house in order. South Africa were preparing for their return to Test cricket for years. They had coaches, training camps and a lot more people involved than we have.

He added: "Australia had a slump when people were calling for Allan Border to resign but they put their house in order. South Africa were preparing for their return to Test cricket for years. They had coaches, training camps and a lot more people involved than we have.

We need to get our fellows much more rounded. They are playing for their country before they know what the flag and the badge mean. We should be instilling that in our youngsters from the ages of 13 and 14 and teaching them about the great fellows who have gone before.

Significantly, he added: "We don't have a lot of players in county cricket where you can develop the discipline, the professional attitude and the competitive spirit that you need. The South Africans are still sending their batsmen to England and so are the Australians because they realise the value of playing that sort of cricket."

For the moment, however, the West Indies must look to Australia for a glimmer of hope. There Hooper was saying that he hoped to return for the Barbados Test but it all depended on medical reports on his month-old son who is being treated in Adelaide for an undisclosed medical condition.

"If the result is negative, as I hope to God it will be then I'll head back," he said. "Sitting and watching the Test on television, I was sort of born in two because I'd like to think I could make a difference, but when you've got a sick son... well, I'm sure the board understand the situation."

Elsewhere in Australia, Mark Taylor, the former captain of his country, was taking on a promotional role for the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney and talking about the size of the task facing the West Indies against the side he has handed over to Steve Waugh.

"It's harsh to say that they are the worst ever West Indies team because they are playing a very good Australia side," he said. "There is even talk of leaving Shane Warne out of a Test match and that's just unheard of. No other country in the world could afford to make that sort of decision but that's how strong Australian cricket is at the moment."

## Fall from grace

WEST INDIES were undefeated in 27 series (excluding one-off Tests) against South Africa and Sri Lanka between June 1980 and February 1995, winning 19 and drawing eight (Bill Frindall writes).

Such was their resilience that they won or halved a series after being beaten down nine times. Their match record for this period showed 59 wins (including two 5-0 successes against England), 41 draws and just 15 defeats.

Excluding Monday's result, West Indies have lost half of their eight series

since February 1995, winning three and sharing one. They have won 11 of the 38 Tests played during this period, losing 16 times and drawing 11. These 16 defeats include four by an innings, two by 10 wickets and five by over 100 runs.

This latest loss to Australia, following a 5-0 beating in South Africa, was West Indies' sixth defeat in succession, a sequence unparalleled in their history, and only two off the world record. Australia's win by 312 runs was then most emphatic by a margin of 35 Tests in the Caribbean.

By John Goodbody



Flintoff, who learnt to control his impetuosity on the England A tour, amassed an aggregate of 542 first-class runs

## Vaughan and Swann to fore

FROM THRASY PETROPOULOS IN CAPE TOWN

PERSONAL development, not team success, has always been the measure of achievement for a cricket tour. In that regard this winter's excursion to Zimbabwe and South Africa was no different. Individuals have furthered their claims for full international recognition, just as others have faded somewhat put under the spotlight.

This time, however, some players have emerged with reputations enhanced because of a run of success which saw England A remain undefeated to the end of an eight-week tour, including two admirable victories over first-class opposition in South Africa.

Once again, while England's senior side flattered to deceive on foreign soil, in Australia, the development team was wrapping up an international series victory. It has now been five years and 29 matches since an England A side lost a first-class match of any description, to Natal oo

on almost any surface makes him a rare breed: an off spinner who on his day becomes a strike bowler. England A would probably not have achieved two of their three first-class victories had Swann not taken significant batches of wickets. Swann was disappointing with the bat, however.

After Andrew Flintoff was twice caught on the boundary in Kwekwe, he responded by pushing singles. While Alec Stewart lost all five tosses in the Ashes series, Michael Vaughan's policy of calling "tails" failed him only once in ten matches.

Good fortune aside, Vaughan's first serious stab at captaincy was impressive, particularly his handling of the Zimbabwe leg, where re-establishing the credibility of English cricket, both on and off the field, was of primary importance.

This was by some distance the most successful of Vaughan's three A tours. At 24 he cuts a mature and straightforward figure. Decisive, if

undemonstrative as a captain, he is sensitive to the individual needs of players and conscious of the necessity for communication. He showed himself both able to play long, drawn innings to save matches and aggressive, fluent affairs to set up declarations.

For the second successive A tour, the two leading wicket-takers in first-class matches were spinners. Dean Cosker, who in Kenya and Sri Lanka was second to Ashley Giles, this year finished with 22 wickets to Graeme Swann's 21.

It was Swann, however, who captured the imagination. An ability to spin the ball

## RESULTS

## ZIMBABWE

JAN 1st v Country Districts (Harare), won by an innings.  
JAN 1st v Country Districts (Harare), match abandoned.  
JAN 20-24 v Mashonaland (Harare), match abandoned.

JAN 22-26 v Mashonaland (Harare), match abandoned.

JAN 22-26 v Mashonaland (Harare), won by 73 runs.

JAN 26-28 v President's XI (Kwekwe), match drawn.

FEB 2-6 v Zimbabwe A (Harare), match drawn.

FEB 2-6 v Zimbabwe A (Bulawayo), won by 153 runs.

FEB 22-26 v Zimbabwe A (Bulawayo), won by one wicket.

FEB 21st v Zimbabwe A (Harare), won by four wickets (D/L method).

FEB 22nd v Zimbabwe A (Harare), won by two wickets (D/L method).

## SOUTH AFRICA

FEB 25-29 v Gauteng (Wanderers), won by ten wickets.

MAR 4-8 v President's XI (Cape Town), won by 46 runs.

## ENGLAND A TOUR AVERAGES

	M	INN	Runs	HS	Avg/ce	100	50	C/S/R	Bowling	O	M	R	W	Avg/ce	SW/10W	BB							
A Flintoff	5	8	1	542	145	77.42	1	5	4/0	S D Thomas	129.2	34	331	18	18.38	1	0	850					
O L Maddy	4	7	1	329	135	54.83	1	2	6/0	D A Cosker	203.1	51	504	22	22.90	1	0	557					
M B Loys	4	7	0	338	133	49.00	1	2	4/0	O P Swann	201.5	43	538	21	25.61	1	0	577					
M G Vaughan	5	8	0	330	125	42.00	1	2	4/0	J D Lewry	47	18	129	5	25.80	0	0	345					
M G Vaughan	5	8	0	217	89	27.00	1	2	4/0	M M Bettis	184	4	62	2	31.00	0	0	261					
M G Vaughan	5	8	0	189	65	23.00	1	2	3/0	G P Swann	98.2	33	203	2	101.50	1	0	479					
M G Vaughan	5	8	2	154	47	25.00	0	0	1/1/0	P J Franks	19	4	46	0	—	0	0	—					
M G Vaughan	5	8	1	176	48	22.00	0	0	0/0	A Flintoff	9	2	19	0	—	0	0	—					
D A Cosker	5	8	2	108	26	17.00	0	0	0/0	D L Maddy	113	35	272	7	36.85	0	0	479					
S J Harrison	5	4	2	20	21*	13.50	0	0	0/0	V S Solanki	4	0	11	0	—	0	0	—					
S J Harrison	5	4	2	17	14*	12.50	0	0	0/0	M P Vaughan	12	2	32	0	—	0	0	—					
J H Key	3	5	0	52	25	10.00	0	0	0/0	M G N Windows	2	0	7	0	—	0	0	—					
J O Lewis	2	2	0	17	15	8.50	0	0	0/0	* denotes not out													
P J Franks	1	1	0	8	8	8.00	0	0	0/0														
M M Bettis	1	1	0	1	1	1.00	0	0	0/0														

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Champions choose bowler to stay the course

BY RICHARD HOBSON

LEICESTERSHIRE will defend the county championship with a new overseas player this season after deciding to sign Mike Kasprzak rather than retaining Phil Simmons. While Simmons has been included in the initial West Indies World Cup squad, Kasprzak was omitted by Australia and is therefore available for the whole campaign.

The county, title winners twice in the past three seasons, turned their attention towards a specialist fast bowler when Alan Mullally and Vince Wells were named in the England 15 for World Cup. Mullally is also expected to feature in the Test series against New Zealand in the second half of the summer.

Jack Birkenshaw, the Leicestershire manager, said: "We were delighted for Alan and Vince, but it had a big impact on our bowling resources so we needed a proven international standard bowler. Phil has been a popular and successful player and although he might not make the final cut, the new season is only five weeks away and we had to make a decision."

Kasprzak, 27, has previous experience of championship cricket with Essex and made the last of his 15 Test appearances against England over the winter. He has taken 38 test wickets at 35.36 and, after being left out of the present tour in the West Indies, returned a hat-trick for Queensland against Victoria last week.

Nottinghamshire have acted swiftly after the decision to release Paul Strang by appointing Vasbert Drakes, an all-rounder from Barbados based in South Africa, for 1999. Drakes, 29, who spent two seasons at Sussex, impressed Clive Rice, the Nottinghamshire cricket manager, when he played for Border over the winter.

Kent are now the only county yet to announce who will be their overseas player. Members were told at the annual meeting on Monday night that a final decision will not be made until the final World Cup squads have been announced.

## CYCLING

### Sprints help O'Grady take lead

STUART O'GRADY, of Australia, overhauled Andrei Tchmil of Belgium to take the overall lead in the Paris-Nice stage race yesterday (Jeremy Whittle writes).

O'Grady, the winner of the 1998 Prudential Tour of Britain, did enough in the intermediate sprints during the 20km route south through the Nivernais region to take the white race-leader's jersey with a lead of four seconds, only 48 hours after Boartman, his team-mate, had won the opening prologue stage in the Parisian suburbs.

Meanwhile, Richard Virenque, making his comeback to racing after the 1998 Tour doping scandal, tried his luck on the approach to the finish in Nevers with two attacks, but was soon reeled in as the field built up to a mass sprint, won by Jan Karsipuu, the Estonian sprinter.

O'Grady, will be tested by the next four days of racing that take in a series of climbs in the Massif Central and culminate at the finish in Valberg in the Provençal Alps.

## SPORT IN BRIEF

**SAFETY:</**

# SOMETIMES IT'S EASIER TO TALK TO SOMEONE YOU DON'T LIKE.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EDWARD SYKES



A REGISTERED CHARITY

When you have a problem, it's the most natural thing in the world to want to talk it through with someone.

Sometimes, though, this creates another problem: who's the best person to confide in?

An obvious choice would be a close friend. But let's face it, we don't always choose our friends for their amazing powers of tact, diplomacy and discretion. Tell one person, and you may end up telling the world.

You may be lucky enough to be able to talk to someone in your family. Then again, you may be one of the large number of people who find talking to your nearest and dearest agonisingly embarrassing.

A girlfriend or boyfriend? If you can, great. But sometimes we don't want to expose our weaknesses to those who fancy us.

And sometimes your relationship is the very problem you want to discuss.

That's where The Samaritans can be useful. We're more discreet than your best mate, we'll listen as carefully as your girlfriend or boyfriend, and we're as sympathetic as your family. We're also non-judgemental, unshockable, and extremely experienced.

Our national number is **0345 90 90 90**, and you can e-mail us on [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or visit our homepage at [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org). We're available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

And you don't have to be climbing up the walls before you call us – any kind of problem, big or small, is a good enough reason to pick up the phone.

Call now. You'll find we're remarkably easy to talk to.

**The Samaritans**

We'll go through it with you





# Beneath the glamour, feel the pain

**C**rack, crack, first left fistie then right, so that our dear old droog, the red-vino on tap and the same in all places, like it's all put out by the same big firm — started to pour and spot the nice clean carpet

Words from Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*. This tale of horror was made into a film by Stanley Kubrick, who died at the weekend. It was Kubrick's achievement to make gang violence somehow cosy; somehow gloriously sexy, something to attract not the interest but the outright envy of the middle classes, who, as they watched the film, felt deprived at never having been deprived.

It was the ultimate cinematic achievement in the gentrification of violence: not the stylised violence of a Western, but the real violence of street and housing estate that takes place in an almost tangible future.

There cannot have been a single male student in Britain in 1971 who did not greet his companions with such catch phrases as "What's it going to be then, eh?" and "Come and get one in the yarbles, if you have any yarbles, you eunuch jelly thou."

Violence was never so cuddly as in *A Clockwork Orange*, which brings me to such matters as the recent retirement of Vinny Jones and the world heavyweight boxing championship that takes place this weekend. These are celebrations of the gentrification of violence.

Jones is a man of genuine violence. He has the criminal record to prove it: also the disciplinary record in foot-

ball. And he has become a kind of crudely national icon: a pantomime demon, a loveable villain, whose misdeeds are those of a charming scamp.

And he has made money not in spite of his reputation for violence but because of it. The money that he has earned from various advertising promotions comes because he has made himself an icon of violence. His invitation to act in the film *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* came not only because of a good face, but because a producer knows a publicity angle when he sees one.

Violence hurts. But there is something in all sport — most especially in all televised sport — that plays violence down that transforms violence into loveable scampiness. In sport, violence is a charming peccadillo. If you can forgive it, if you condone it, you have claimed your place in the right sort of male clique.

You either believe me or you have never been to a world heavyweight boxing title fight. There we have a

world of male solidarity in which criminal violence becomes one more tale of Runyonesque charm, larded with tough wisecracks. Tyson's committed suicide! That must make the Bruno fight even.

How we laughed. Boxing makes violence acceptable. The big padded gloves minimise the appearance of such ugly stuff as blood, and at the same time maximise the fist's concussive effect on the brain. Which, of course, you don't see. Big, soft, cutesome boxing gloves give the right sort of cosmetic touch to violence. Boxing has created a world in which even Tyson becomes admirable, and in certain lights, even loveable, and Don King is a merry figure of fun.

Frank Bruno, whose career path from school bully to wife-beater involved a detour as a heavyweight boxer, was able to make himself a totem of loveableness: Bruno, like Little Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*, became one of the ultimate expressions of the prefabrication, the gentrification of a Burgess text.

Television sport gives us the falsity that violence doesn't really hurt; that violence is charming and that men of violence are loveable rogues.

Viddy well, my brothers, viddy well.

**Tevised sport gives us the falsity that violence doesn't really hurt'**

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View



Goode and Archer return to the game's roots in the North Hall at Badminton House

## Archer aims high for centenary

Badminton's advance to a modern business has helped its leading players, Richard Eaton argues

**SIMON ARCHER** and Joanne Goode are two of England's best hopes in a new era which, by the start of the next century, will have brought millions of pounds into badminton. They have also been discovering what it was like a century ago, when Lady Henrietta Somerset kept a shuttlecock in the air more than 2,000 times at her Gloucestershire country home, Badminton House.

The piece of time-travel has been prompted by the centenary celebrations of the All-England championships this week. The world-famous open tournament has helped to transform an aristocratic pastime into a professional sport played in more than 150 nations, and starts again today at the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham.

It was in the 1850s that Badminton House lent its name to the game. Now Archer and Goode have taken their version of it back to the Duke of Beaufort's residence and tried to play it Henrietta's way. "I kept treading on the skirt," Goode, who wore fashionably tight-fitting shorts when she won three gold medals at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur last September, said.

Archer, who set the world speed-hitting record of 162mph recently, was more concerned this time not to split his blazer. However, he should be at full throttle again today when he continues his partnership with Goode. They reached the final of the world grand prix championships in Brunei last month and are among the seeds for a mixed doubles event in which they are trying to become the first home players for five years to win an All-England title. Sadly, their draw could not have been worse had they been ordered to compete in Victorian costume all week. Kim Dong-Moon and Ra Kyung-Moon, the brilliantly quick South Koreans who beat them in Brunei, are in their section and could bar their way at the quarter-final stage.

Asians may dominate the tournament a little less than in recent years, because Sun Jun, the title-holder from China, pulled out with a leg injury yesterday, making Peter Gade, the world No 1 from Denmark, a stronger contender. Two other Chinese players, Ge Fei and Gu Jun, the Olympic and world women's doubles champions, have also withdrawn.

Two other casualties were

The medium of television has a good deal to do with this phenomenon. The cinema screen exploited the terrible ambiguities of the subject matter in Kubrick's film: you were always aware, in relishing the violence, relishing the exoticism of Little Alex and his strange nadsat vocabulary, you were relishing the unspeakable. That was the brilliant trick at the heart of the film.

But television flattens the violence, and makes a boxing match look like an ill-choreographed saloon brawl in a bad Western. It is the same with Formula One: on television it looks like Scalextric. But stand a few inches away from real action, and you feel power beyond your imagining.

**Y**ou can literally feel the earth shake when a racing car goes past. And if you watch a heavyweight land a punch with his full weight behind it — a million miles away from the slaps and cuffs of ball-game spats — you feel something profound; and profoundly horrible. This is not a film, this is real, potentially lethal violence. You feel that in what Little Alex calls your gutswits.

The gentrification of violence is something that Kubrick managed as a *coup de cinema*, a stroke of genius. Sport manages the same trick on a daily basis but without the moral foundation of a Burgess text.

Television sport gives us the falsity that violence doesn't really hurt; that violence is charming and that men of violence are loveable rogues.

Viddy well, my brothers, viddy well.

**Tevised sport gives us the falsity that violence doesn't really hurt'**

TELEVISION CHOICE

## Brits going Dutch

Modern Times: Amsterdamage BBC2, 9pm

Crazy title crazy film — at least judging by opening shots which suggest that drugs will wait you into an impeccably blissful world of colour and sparkle. First we watch a turned-on "Pasi Taylor" whose female characteristics slightly outweigh the male. He/she lives in Amsterdam ("Honeypot of Europe") and writes bodice-ripping novels which don't sell. Her great chum is Dawn who has an adulterous husband and a young son Kris, back home. Dawn's crumpled face is in permanent smile mode and you can't help wanting to her when, if she has time for trips to see Kris by drug-running. Country Brits visit the Dutch capital for a fun (and legal) weekend — and stay. Pasi, Dawn and a now grown-up Kris are still there. But towards the end of the film, they seem in sombre mood, pondering what might have been.

Trouble at the Tops: Not the Nice Girl BBC2, 9.50pm

Petra Doring obviously never goes anywhere without a glittering belt buckle, numerous rings, at least three necklaces and her sleek, tiny legs and a chestnut brooch. She is Calypso, incarnation of the woman behind the costume jewellery firm which, until recently, was Britain's most successful direct-selling company. Then it went broke, leaving a trail of equally bewitched staff weeping in its wake. "She used me then totally dropped me," walls one. "I'm still owed £10,000," walls another. None of this fazes Petra who simply picks herself up, dusts herself down and starts all over again — reselling her baubles under a different name.

Sex and the City Channel 4, 10pm

If maiden aunts find themselves blushing when they switch this series I don't advise them to watch tonight's discussion among the New York thirty-something matronesses about one aspect of lovemaking which in polite circles is surely better left unspoken. Prudish? I checked with two thirty-



Life, love and infidelity with the thirty-something in *Sex and the City* (C4, 10pm)

somethings I know to see if it really does go on and they said: "Oh that — of course we've discussed it. But isn't this subject a bit passe when you're over 30?" Back to the series. Carrie is deeply in love with Big — until she spots him at a corner table with, gulp, another woman. This sparks the inevitable soul-searching about how far a courting couple should be expected to remain faithful.

A Living Hell BBC2, 11.20pm

Professor Lewis Wolpert continues this fascinating and sympathetic series on the possible causes of clinical depression, which strikes one in five of us — "but over half of these are never diagnosed and treated". Often patients don't seek help because they feel ashamed: suffering pain from physical symptoms such as fatigue which don't seem worth talking about. "But," says Wolpert, "you can start feeling physically ill because you are depressed." Hardship hit are new mothers, but those weary, often suicidal victims of the so-called "baby blues" can be helped. Antidepressants are the most common treatment but there are many physical causes (such as hormone deficiencies) to be considered as well. Elizabeth Cowley

RADIO CHOICE

Crofts: The Business Radio 4, 11am

The Ramp Radio 4, 4pm

Part two of Peter Day's case study on the development and building of a semiconductor factory for Intel. The subject may seem dry but Day keeps the technicalities out of the script and thus produces a fascinating insight into the way companies operate in the computer field. The series got an unexpected bonus last night when manufacturers in South-East Asia started flooding the market with cheap, microchips, thus throwing that old-fashioned tool, a calculator, into the works of Intel's planning for its new Irish plant. Intel's chairman, Andy Grove, is sanguine: when prices fall he depends on his sales people to keep the market for chips alive. But at what price, in the context of a £1 billion factory investment? Peter Barnard

RADIO 1 (BBC)

BBC WORLD SERVICE

6.30am Zoo Ball 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00pm Jo Whiley 2.00 Mark Radcliffe 4.00 Dave Pearce 5.45 Newsbeat 8.00 Dave Pearce 8.00 Mary Anne Hobbs; The Evening Session 10.00 Movie Update with Mark Kermode 16.10 John Rivers 12.00am Gillian Pettersen 2.00 Cilla Carson 4.00 Scott Mills

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.30 Ken Walker 12.00pm Jimmy Young 2.00 Ed Stewart 5.00 Johnnie Gordy 7.00 Nick Barras 8.00 Mike Harding 9.00 Barry Gordy's Motown 13.00 Top of the Pops 2 7.30 John Inverdale's Football Night. Commentary and reports on the latest action. Plus, the National Lottery Draw 10.00 Littlejohn. No-nonsense football talk on tonight's European and domestic action 11.00 Late Night Live 1.00am Up All Night

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

5.00am Morning Reports 8.00 Breakfast with Julian Worricker and Victoria Derbyshire 8.00 Sports Campion 8.30 The Sophs Zone 7.00 Official Cup 8.00 Lynne Coop 8.30 The Big Issues 10.00 James White 1.00am Ian Collins

VIRGIN

6.30am Chris Evans 9.30 Russ Williams 10.00 Nick Abbott 4.00 Hamel Scott 6.45 Pete and Geoff 10.00 Mark Forrest 1.00am James Merrill 4.30 Richard Allen

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air Peter Tatchell previews this year's Cardiff Singer of the World contest as the successful candidates for the competition are announced.

8.00 Masterworks with Peter Hobday. Brahms' (Tragic Overture); Godfrey (Pastorale in G, Minuet in G minor, Renaissance); Tippett (Fantasia Concertante on a Theme of Corelli).

10.30 Art of the Violin: Ma-Hui Wu-Chung

11.00 Sound Stories: Indian Summers Giuseppe Verdi was famously persuaded out of virtual retirement by his collaborator, Arrigo Boito.

12.00 Opera from the West End Concerts. A concert given at last year's Aldeburgh Festival by Ilya Itin, piano, Scriabin (Etudes); Op. 8 Nos 2 and 4; Piano Sonata No 2; Sonata-Fantaisie, Two Poems, Op. 32; Rachmaninov (Melody in E, Op. 3 No 3; Moment Musical in E flat major, Op. 16 No 2; Op. 36 No 3); Schubert (Sonata No 2 in B flat minor, Op. 36, revised version) (6)

2.00 The BBC Orchestra National Orchestra of Wales under David Atherton. George Peacock, Violin; Smetana (Má Vlast); Grieg (Peer Gynt Suite No. 1); Brahms (Violin Concerto in G, Op. 77); Tchaikovsky (Symphony No 2 in C minor); Liszt (Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2); Franck (Symphony in D minor).

4.00 Choral Evensong Live from Norwich Cathedral. Organist and master of the music David Dunnell

5.00 In Tuna Sean Rafferty celebrates the 250th anniversary of the librettist Lorenzo da Ponte

7.30 Performance on 3: The Magic Fountain. Spanish Opera, giving the British premiere of Delibes' operetta. An intermission of three hours from Wagner's Tristan und Isolde. Stephen Allen, tenor; Anne Mason, soprano; Steffan Dean, bass; Jonathan Veira, bass; Scottish Opera Chorus and Orchestra under Richard Armstrong.

9.45 Concerto for Double Bass and Piano: The Blue Monk by Zemlinsky with Mark Holloway (35)

10.00 Ensemble Parrot Green introduces a recital by Tasmin Little, violin, and Piers Lane, piano; Kreisler (Præludium and Allegro); Beethoven (Violin Sonata in F, Op. 24, Spring); Elgar (Salut d'amour); Falla (Spanish Dance); Ponce (Estrella)

10.45 Night Music 10pm Shostakovich's 12th String Quartet

11.30 Jazz Notes Alyn Shipton presents the final part of a concert by the Alan Garley Big Band

12.00 Composer of the Week: Tchaikovsky (r)

1.00 Through the Night 1.00 Mieczyslaw Honzowski, piano (No 4, Fall of the Leaf) 3.00 School: and Turners' Songs, violin, Polish NSO under Jan Kreczmar (No 2 in Concerto) 5.00 in D minor, K466; Berg (Bacchanal Concerto) 1.55 Schubert (Der Tod, das ist die lebendige Nacht) 2.00 Brahms (Chorale Preludes, Op. 122) 2.30 Rued Langgaard (Symphony No 4, Fall of the Leaf) 3.00 School: and Turners' Songs, violin, Polish NSO under Workshop 4.00 The School: 4.30 Talking Points 5.00 Schmitz (Lamento sopra la morte Ferdinand III) 5.05 Szymonowski (Piano Sonata No 3)

RADIO 4

the limits of the human mind 4.30 Thinking Allowed Laura Taylor and guests think the unthinkable about society

5.00 PM with Kevin Bocquet and Chris Lowe

6.00 Six O'Clock News

6.30 Ballyhooligan Christopher Fitz-Simon's comedy (r)

7.00 George Galloway George Galloway's car in 7.15 Front Row 7.30 The Times

7.45 The Cry of the Bittern Tim Jackson's environmental drama, broadcast earlier as part of Women's Hour (19/20) (r)

8.00 Moral Maze Michael Buerk presents ethical dilemmas from around the world, with Harriet Harrop and David Cope

8.45 Last Tales The Times columnist Will Self considers the story of the Passion and Resurrection from a secular point of view (4/7)

9.00 The Lamp Peter Day reports on the semi-conductor chip industry in Dublin. See Choice (r)

9.30 Midweek Lively conversation in The Times column Libby Purves and guest (r)

10.00 The World Tonight Presented by Justin Webb

10.40 Budget Response From the Shadow Chancellor

10.45 Book at Bedtime: Ernest Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not* (r)

11.00 Late Night on 4: Tracy, Bally, Bletchley Julian Dutton's comedy series in the town of Bletchley. With Liz Fraser and Peter Hargreaves (4/6) (r)

11.15 Macbeth's Palace The stage manager's prize possession goes missing (5/6)

11.30 (L) Today in Parliament Political update

12.00 (L) Monday 12.00am The Late Books: Golf Dreams Part two: The American novelist John Updike's passion for golf (2/4) (r)

12.45 Shipping Forecast 1.00 As World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE: RADIO 1. FM

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999

# Fine bouquet but body recalls other vintages

**M**aybe the most perplexing thing about *Wonderful You* (TV), which was making itself comely in the Tuesday night slot vacated by *News at Ten*, is how watchable it was by the end of its 60 minutes even though it pivoted on the life of a man whom you spent most of the opening episode of this latest middle-class, thirtysomething, relationship drama wanting to slap very hard: possibly with a wheeljack.

Henry (Richard Lumsden) is worried about turning 30, an event which happens to be about a month away. This may well be grounds for anxiety, but you soon realise that the reason why Henry's so very anxious is that he's clearly afflicted by an unfortunate disease which results in his physical and mental ages moving in opposite directions.

At the age of 29 he already exhibits the emotional maturity of a 13-year-old; so you can see that

by the time he's, say, 35, he'll have regressed to behaving like a nine-year-old; and when he turns 40 he will probably have to start learning his alphabet all over again. In fact he's so mentally inert that it actually requires a friend to point out to him that this apparently cataclysmic birthday is imminent.

There are people out there who face up to the prospect of brutal torture, tribal massacre, and life-threatening disease more calmly than that. Henry is facing up to the prospect of turning 30. At times the whole thing feels like part of the improvisation show *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*, where the stiff challenge facing the panel this week is to create an hour-long drama out of one slightly hysterical man's fears of turning 30.

How come none of the other characters — who have both motive and opportunity — feels inclined to slap him hard with a wheeljack? In one of the show's

many wild coincidences, Henry bumps into Clare (Lucy Aikhurst), a sleek blonde whom he hasn't seen since they were at Poly together, just hours after he tried to contact her as part of his new strategy to gather what he assumes are the trappings of adulthood, including a partner.

**C**lare is on her way to the dentist. When we next see her she is back at her office desk with a dreamy, faraway look in her eye, as though she is conveying to us that Henry has awakened something passionate deep inside her. For this to be plausible, such romantic feelings could only have resulted from mild delirium triggered by the dentist's use of too much anaesthetic.

The dialogue as well as the plot occasionally gets demilled into cliché, like a Scalextric car that has taken a corner too haphazardly. And it sometimes has the air of

## REVIEW

Joe Joseph



painting-by-numbers drama, lurching from comedy to emotional conflict to slapstick to melodrama like a drunk trying to find his way home. Jilly Goolden would take one sip and detect hints of *Cold Feet* and *Friends*, with base notes of *This Life* and *Thirtysomething*; even Lisa Kudrow's dippy folk-songs find an echo in Henry's wine bar wailings.

To be fair, while Lumsden — as

co-writer of *Wonderful You* — has given himself the biggest part, it is also the soppiest part. And given that the characters are mostly off-the-peg rather than bespoke (Greg Wise plays the successful young accountant, black Porsche junches at *Conran's* Bluebird restaurant: there's the couple who have been together for seven years — the man isn't ready for marriage, the woman is; there is Henry and his best friend, Heather, compiling the lists which are now mandatory in all thirtysomething drama — in this case their respective 'ten worst shags'), it is a testament to the quality of the cast that they carry it off so well.

Pacy direction from Matt Lipsey, a seductively moody sound-track, and a glossy filmic sheen also pull you into the lives of these North Londoners by the end of this first episode. There are enough loose threads left dangling to lure you into tuning in next week and

the weeks after that, too. I'd like to think that this is because of the power of the central character, Henry. But I'm not sure if it isn't in spite of it.

**J**ackson Pollock was also a tormented soul, but at least you feel he had plenty to be tormented about. **Jackson Pollock**

— Love and Death on Long Island, Teresa Griffiths's film for BBC2's *Close Up*, was a graceful and moving collage of reminiscences from friends, colleagues, lovers and critics of America's most famous artist, Postwar America, hungry for cultural heroes, feasted this Wyoming farmer's boy along with his fellow hard-living, rebellious Abstract Expressionists.

As a result, Pollock became America's first celebrity artist. But he also became America's first celebrity-artist casualty. His cult status was sealed when he died, drunk, in a car crash at the age of

44, the finale to a life of alcoholism, emotional confusion, and his inability to cope with the adulation his art aroused. It was a pattern of fame-and-fall later mirrored by James Dean, Marilyn Monroe and others cursed by 20th-century American celebrity.

Unlike, say, Damien Hirst, who descended on the art world as a fully formed commercial artist convinced of his own genius and price tag, Pollock was never certain that his manner of expressing his feelings on the canvas rather than illustrating them on the canvas even constituted proper art. It's the one thing he and his critics agree on. But what infuriates Pollock's detractors is that much as though his art might look like your five-year-old could do it, none of the artists who mimicked his style when he became famous overnight managed to produce a painting that anyone would want to look at once, let alone twice.

BBC1

- 6.00am Business Breakfast 7.00 BBC Breakfast News (T) 9.05 Kitchen (T) 9.05 Wipeout 10.10 The Venetian Show (T) 10.25 News (T) 11.00 Change That Can't Cook, Won't Cook (T) 11.55 News (T) 12.00 Open City My Bluff (90720) 12.30 Top Tip Challenge (T) 14.00 The Weather Show (T) 16.30 4.05 Words and Pictures (985129) 9.45 10.00 Teletubbies (96519) 10.30 Numberplate (T) 12.30 Working Lunch (29774) 1.00 One O'Clock News (T) (36788) 1.30 Regional News; Weather (50663720) 1.40 Neighbours (T) (35710478) 2.05 Inside (T) (5624923) 2.25 Through the Keyhole (T) (6164818) 3.25 Children's BBC: Playdays 3.45 Little Monsters 3.50 ChuckleVision 4.10 See It, Saw It 4.35 The Wild House 5.00 Newsround 5.10 Blue Peter 5.25 Neighbours (T) (931478) 6.00 Six O'Clock News; Weather (T) (671) 6.30 Regional News Magazine (923) 7.00 Holiday on a Shoestring Craig Doyle visits Kenya and Honi Blackman travels to the Austrian Tyrol (T) (4769) 7.30 Tomorrow's World Craig Doyle reports on the ongoing search for tropical fruits in the rainforest (T) (107) 8.00 Changing Rooms: Interior design challenge from Cringford, Essex (T) (6161) 8.30 Comic Relief Jukebox (T) (636930) 8.50 The National Lottery: Greatest Hits Music by top bands of the 1970s and 1980s (18281) 9.00 Nine O'Clock News; Regional News; Weather (T) (6519) 9.30 Budget Response (T) (926213) 9.35 Jasper Carrott: Back to the Front More stand-up comedy (316) (903619) 10.00 National Lottery Update (985132) 10.10 The X Files Mulder is held hostage by a man under the delusion that his boss is really a monster (T) (60224) 10.20 Changing Rooms: Interior design challenge from Cringford, Essex (T) (6161) 10.30 Comic Relief Jukebox (T) (636930) 10.50 The National Lottery: Greatest Hits Music by top bands of the 1970s and 1980s (18281) 11.00 Nine O'Clock News; Regional News; Weather (T) (6519) 11.30 Budget Response (T) (926213) 11.45 Jasper Carrott: Back to the Front More stand-up comedy (316) (903619) 12.00 National Lottery Update (985132) 12.10 The X Files Mulder is held hostage by a man under the delusion that his boss is really a monster (T) (60224) 12.20 Weather (1225430) 12.35 Five Go Mad in the Kitchen With Ruby Wax. Lost in series (T) (497190) 11.00 Harry Enfield's Television: Programme Comedy sketches (T) (7) (7368) 12.00 BBC News 24 (35524091)



Blonde bombshell Pamela Anderson gets the wax treatment (11.30pm)

- 11.30 Ruby Wax Meets Pamela Anderson Another chance to see the interview with the Baywatch star (T) (7) (7368) 12.00am Deadly Past (1995) An ex-con discusses the mistake of attacking on an emotional level with his former lover. Thriller starring Cedric Pfeiffer. Directed by Tibor Takacs (T) (3310417) 12.00 Weather (1225430) 12.35 Five Go Mad in the Kitchen With Ruby Wax. Lost in series (T) (497190) 11.00 Harry Enfield's Television: Programme Comedy sketches (T) (7) (7368) 12.00 BBC News 24 (35524091)

- 10.55 The State (335872) 11.25 Five Go Mad in the Kitchen (T) (7) (7368) 11.30 Harry Enfield's Television: Programme Comedy (T) (7) (7368) 12.00 Weather (1225430) 12.35 Five Go Mad in the Kitchen With Pamela Anderson (T) (7) (7368) 12.30 FILM: Deadly Past (T) (5274121) 1.50 News (T) (1468362) 1.55 6.00 BBC News 24 (35524098)

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BBC2

- 7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show Pingu (7542768) 7.05 Teletubbies (4161468) 7.30 Snorks (6497381) 7.50 The Really Wild Show (595632) 8.18 Revival (T) 8.45 Police Dog Shorts (1214580) 8.50 Prime Time (1207747) 9.00 Environment (783290) 9.10 Why? Where? What? Why? (7559128) 9.25 The Art (487316) 9.45 Words and Pictures (985129) 10.00 Teletubbies (96519) 10.30 Numberplate (T) 12.30 Working Lunch (29774) 1.00 Children's BBC: Bum (9806202) 1.10 War Walks: The events of the Battle of the Somme (T) (41971316) 1.40 Hart-Davis on History: A Welsh geology hunt (3572467) 2.10 A Weekend with Colour: A visit to the Ulster American Folk Park (9584720) 2.40 News; Weather (T) (3383010) 2.45 Westminster (T) (5010497) 3.00 News; Weather (T) (6597497) 3.55 Kite Advice show (9933887) 4.25 Ready, Steady, Cook (T) (7372132) 4.55 Esther (T) (5234213) 5.00 This Morning (T) (300) 6.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation Clara's Imaginary Friend gets the crew into trouble (T) (344720) 6.45 Buffy the Vampire Slayer (T) (344045) 7.30 Sophie Grigson's Thai: Thai chicken curry with kaffir lime (T) (748) 8.00 University Challenge Sheffield University/Triple College, Cambridge (T) (4958) 8.30 Looking Good Lowri Turner gives two viewers a new look (T) (8215) 9.00 **AmberDamage**: Documentary on the 24-hour party city of Amsterdam (T) (723671)



Petra Dowling, the boss of the failed jewellery firm Cabouchon (9.50pm)

- 9.50 **Trouble at the Top** The demise of the direct-selling jewellery firm Cabouchon (T) (518565) 10.30 Budget Response (T) (215682) 10.35 Newlight (T) (738403)

- 11.20 **A Living Hell** An investigation into a case of childhood depression (233) (884836) 11.55 Weather (T) (735384) 12.00 **Diamonds** Box (68411) 12.30 **BBC Learning Zone**: Open University: The Science of Climate? 1.00 A Winter Sleep 1.30 Breathing Deeply 2.00 School: Sciences and Sport: Sportskool 3.00 Short Circuit 4.00 Languages: Talk Spanish 3.50 Family and Work and Training: RCN Nursing Updates 5.45 Open University: A Tale of Four Cities 6.10 Bloodlines: A Family Legacy 6.35 First Steps to Autonomy

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**HOCKEY 48**

Wendy plays a fair game in boys' side

# SPORT

WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 1999

## Gregory convinced by Collymore's illness



**Collymore: mood swings**

**JOHN GREGORY**, the Aston Villa manager, yesterday conceded for the first time that his stressed striker, Stan Collymore, is a "sick man". Yet the controversial England international could still play a part in the FA Carling Premiership game with Derby County at Pride Park tonight, despite being on anti-depressant medication.

"Until now, I have been totally sceptical about his need for counselling," Gregory said. "But I was totally ignorant about clinical depression and what it is to suffer from the problems Stan has been facing."

Collymore has been attending a psychiatric clinic in Roehampton since

breaking down before Villa's FA Cup fourth-round tie with Fulham on January 23. But it was only after an hour-long, heart-to-heart meeting with the former Liverpool and Nottingham Forest forward yesterday that the full extent of his problems became clear to his manager.

The basic problem is that Stan sees the downside of everything because his mind is totally negative," Gregory said. "I didn't understand it before and I still find it hard to understand now. But that probably has something to do with the fact that I'm an optimist and the complete opposite."

"We sat down and Stan went

through everything very articulately. He was able to make me appreciate what he was trying to tell me.

"He seems to have no control whatsoever over his mood swings, which can be violent at times. The highs can last for Saturday night. But then the lows kick in on Sunday morning, often for the rest of the week."

"Some days he wakes up and feels he could climb Everest. Other mornings he can't face climbing out of bed. He is clearly a sick man. I admit I have been sceptical about the whole thing. But I wouldn't

BY CHRIS MOORE

want anyone to suffer what he is going through at the moment."

Yet Gregory also admitted that he could not see any solution to the situation. "I've been told that one in five people in the country suffer from clinical depression at some stage in their lives. Some get over it completely. Others never do."

Despite six weeks of constant counselling, Gregory revealed that there is no obvious improvement in Collymore's condition.

"Apparently it could last for two weeks, six months or five years. But what is clear is that it's not some-

thing that has suddenly happened to him. When he analyses his past, it's something he probably suffered from before he came to Villa," he said.

"Stan insists he's not interested in playing for any other club than Aston Villa. He just wants to get well again and be a success here. But he feels he needs to continue with his treatment, and the doctors want him to keep attending the clinic at least three times a week."

"That's obviously not an ideal situation for any manager, not least because you can't afford to carry any passengers in the Premiership. We all need players 100 per cent committed who can be relied to go out on the pitch and fight for dear life to win games. Right now, I accept the most important thing for Stan is to get himself well again, which means more to him than any football match."

Collymore is likely to start on the bench at Derby tonight, when Villa are definitely without the injured Steve Watson, Ugo Ehiogu, Ian Taylor and Simon Grayson. But with doubts also surrounding the strikers, Dion Dublin and Julian Joachim, Gregory refused to discount the possibility of Collymore starting his first Premiership game since December 21.

**Player complains of 'unfair treatment'**

## Beckham ends his silence over Hoddle

BY MATT DICKINSON AND RUSSELL KEMPSON

**DAVID BECKHAM** has used his first television interview since the World Cup to reveal his disappointment with Glenn Hoddle, the former England coach and his boyhood idol, although the only real surprise is that it has taken the Manchester United player until now to do so.

Beckham's frustration with Hoddle began to fester long before his fateful dismissal against Argentina, but it was Hoddle's failure to speak to him after that game that clearly annoyed him most, as viewers of *The Football Millionaires*, presented by Alan Hansen, will observe.

"I was gutted really," Beckham says. "More than anything I wanted to play the rest of the game. Tony Adams came and sat down with me afterwards because I was sat just outside the changing-room. He was brilliant. I will remember that because I needed it at the time."

"The manager did not

actually speak to me after the game. Not at all. My family and friends were the only people who wanted to talk to me."

Hoddle's failure to offer a consoling arm nor only perplexed Beckham but also Hansen, whose documentary will be broadcast on BBC1 at 10.30pm next Tuesday. "To be honest, it surprised me," Hansen said yesterday. "I think most managers would have had a word with him. Yes, Beckham was reckless, but the World Cup was over and you have to try to console the boy."

Beckham took a giant stride towards rebuilding his image last week when he swapped shirts with Diego Simeone, his Argentine adversary. "It's made me grow up a lot," he says. "It's made me realise a few things. Personally, I feel I was treated unfairly [by Hoddle]."

"I think the majority [of supporters] dislike me. I do not know if it is jealousy or not,

but I think there are more people who do not like me than like me. I would love to be really popular, but I do not know if that is going to happen now."

Otherwise, the programme merely skims the glossy surface of a rich footballer's glamorous life, with Michael Owen revealing little other than a talent for golf and snooker and a cheeky sense of humour.

"Why play something if you are rubbish?" he chides Hansen as he thrashes him at snooker.

Dwight Yorke reveals that he is lonely in Manchester; Robbie Savage that you are set up for life after five years as a player in the FA Carling Premiership; Alan Shearer reveals nothing, as usual. Perhaps the most poignant moment is the appearance alongside her husband of Graeme Le Saux's wife, Mariana. Hopefully, Robbie Fowler will take notice.

Beckham and his United team-mates have another televised appointment tonight, when they play Chelsea in their FA Cup sixth-round replay at Stamford Bridge. With Paul Durkin once more in charge, the need for self-discipline will be of paramount importance.

Durkin handed out five bookings and two dismissals — Roberto Di Matteo, of Chelsea, and Paul Scholes — at Old Trafford on Sunday and is unlikely to shirk from similar measures should matters get out of hand.

It makes the return of Dennis Wise, the spiky Chelsea captain, a potentially decisive factor. If he behaves and produces the leadership qualities that he possesses, Chelsea should prosper; if he misbehaves and incurs Durkin's wrath, the balance will probably tip in United's favour.

**Rovers fight drop** 53

Wise has been sent off four times this season and missed 14 matches because of suspension. "It didn't help losing Roberto when we did, we were just starting to open up," Wise said yesterday. "It was difficult enough with 11 men, but with ten we could do was sit back and try to absorb everything United threw at us. We battled well and it was very tight in the end. It always seems to be that way when we play United."

Chelsea's Cup record against United is poor. They have beaten them only once — a 2-0 victory in the sixth round in 1980 — and included in a succession of defeats is the 5-3 humiliation at Stamford Bridge in the third round last season.

If the replay is drawn after extra time, Arsenal's semi-final opponents will be decided by a penalty shoot-out. Gianluca Vialli, the Chelsea player-manager, is suspended and Dan Petrescu is on international duty with Romania. However, Celestine Babayaro and Frank Leboeuf, like Wise, are available after suspension and Michael Duberry has recovered from injury.

**SOLUTION TO NO 1660**  
ACROSS: 1 Staple 4 Ford 9 Enjoy 10 Air miss 11 Fiddler  
12 Rambo 13 Restoration 17 Lager 19 Gibbons  
22 Comrade 23 Alibi 24 Dual 25 Stench  
DOWN: 1 Sheaf 2 Adjudge 3 Loyal 5 Odium 6 Despot  
7 Hair trigger 8 Dry run 14 Turban 15 Oxonian 16 Placid  
18 Gamma 20 Blast 21 Swish

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**LINKS**  
TELEVISION: Six Sports 2 (7pm)



Lewis relieved his frustration with the American press with a two-fisted onslaught on the punchball yesterday. Photograph: Al Bello/Allsport

## American reporters gang up on Lewis

FROM SRIKUMAR SEN  
BOXING CORRESPONDENT  
IN NEW YORK

**LENNOX LEWIS** will find out on Saturday whether he can achieve the recognition in the United States that he has always craved. He meets Evander Holyfield for the undisputed world heavyweight championship here at Madison Square Garden, but remains sceptical whether the Americans will give him his due if he wins, because the American press has always been against him and will find some reason to minimise his achievement.

Lewis has always been presented here as a heavyweight without the heart of a warrior. Those who saw his bout with Ray Mercer, who also gave Holyfield a hard fight, should have recognised Lewis's fighting qualities.

But the press has steadfastly refused to give him credit for any of his achievements. Since there is no valid reason for this, the only conclusion that one can come to is that it has something to do with the fact that Lewis might just become the first British fighter in 100 years to end the American domination of the most important division in boxing.

It is amazing that some sports writers, who are in the main genial and fair-minded in conversation, are unable to see there is no justification for the scorn, ridicule and even abuse they heap on Lewis.

The Los Angeles Daily News said after Lewis's successful defence of his title against Tony Tucker in Las Vegas: "Lewis won his fight against Tucker all right, but he lost whatever real right he has to call himself any part of a champion." Certainly my memory of that contest does not reflect this view. Recently Wallace Mat-

thews of the New York Daily Post wrote: "He'll [Holyfield] take away Lewis's heart — not the hardest thing in the world to do." Matthews is a controversial personality, but the views he expressed when this contest was first announced says it all: "Lewis is a heavy-weight title claimant without a portfolio and the richest boxer never to have had a fight of any consequence."

Clearly, Matthews had forgotten that Lewis took just one

**'He has always been presented here as being without a warrior's heart'**

Rob Hughes 50  
Lyne Truss 50

round to knock out Andrew Golota, who sent Riddick Bowe into retirement.

Matthews described Lewis as "a boxer who talks a great game and fights a lousy one, and the latest in a long line of Englishmen who has tried to redeem his country in the sport it invented but finds it nearly impossible to win at."

Lewis refuses to hit back. He said: "They are supposed to be objective but they never are. What have they got against me other than the fact that I'm British? I think they are frightened I'm going to take the title away. They try to

Typical example: Mortgage £100,000 interest only: property value: £110,000; term: 25 years; completion: 10/99; monthly repayment: £12 x £110,000 at 4.20% (APR 4.35%) resulting in a 2.7% increase from the lender's normal variable rate of 3.4% to 4.1%. The typical example shows a 10% increase in the monthly repayment from £12 x £110,000 at 4.20% (APR 4.35%) to £12 x £110,000 at 5.20% (APR 5.35%). In practice the lender's normal variable mortgage rate and APR might differ from that assumed. Total amount payable £130,188.00, calculated to include a 10% increase in the monthly repayment. The total amount payable will depend on the actual interest rate charged by the lender. The lender's normal variable rate is £12 x £110,000 at 3.4% (APR 3.5%). The additional 10% of the loan funded is a maximum of £13,000, paid by the lender to the borrower for the provision of the first complete month's monthly repayment, with more than twice the application fee. 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's illness

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# THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY MARCH 11 1999

Race is  
on to  
be top  
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2

Merger decisions to be removed from political influence

## Small firms get £100m boost

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY  
AND HENRIETTA LAKE

STEPHEN BYERS, the Trade and Industry Secretary, yesterday launched a wide-ranging package of measures to boost business and declared that merger decisions were to be removed from political influence.

Mr Byers set out plans to give smaller companies a £100 million service to target their needs and a chief executive to lobby the Government on their issues. He outlined tax break rules for research and development, pledged targets for implementing the Competitive White Paper and reaffirmed plans to look at relax-

ing the rules on insolvency and bankruptcy to allow failed enterprises to restart businesses.

The Government is to open consultation on removing ministers from the decisions on mergers and acquisitions. Mr Byers said there was a strong case for establishing an independent competition authority that will rule on mergers and takeovers. At present the Trade and Industry Secretary has power of veto over takeovers.

He said it was vital that the decisions "are not taken for short-term political considerations". Ministers will retain powers to rule on takeovers that are in the public interest such as defence-related moves. The decision on which mergers are pub-

GORDON BROWN yesterday hit back at City critics who have claimed that his latest Budget had placed future interest rate cuts at risk, insisting that the Government was maintaining its tough fiscal stance.

The Chancellor played down the impact of promised tax cuts, arguing that the public finances are now "in a fitter stance than in November". He added: "That is something the Bank of England will clearly want to look at

with some interest." However, the pound continued to strengthen against the dollar and the euro as traders concluded that the Budget tax cuts would make the Bank of England less inclined to reduce interest rates again.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies also gave warning that Mr Brown had an even "smaller margin for error" if he was to meet his own tough borrowing guidelines.

Budget impact: 28; Graham Scarjeant 31

play in improving Britain's competitive position."

Additionally, there will be enterprise management incentives to allow smaller companies to offer tax-advantaged shares.

The Competitiveness White Paper, the cornerstone of the Government's efforts to increase productivity, is to be opened to public scrutiny. Targets are to be set for the measures it has promised and the phone numbers of the relevant civil servants will be published for inquiries.

Adair Turner, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, welcomed the DTI initiatives but said it was vital they were implemented effectively. "While the Chan-

cellor [on Tuesday] made investment and innovation his theme, it is the DTI which has a major responsibility for ensuring that wealth creation is at the heart of the policy agenda and for driving through most of the initiatives that affect business on a daily basis."

Tim Melville-Ross, Director-General of the Institute of Directors, said: "The IoD supports many of the measures announced ... to encourage enterprise and competition in the UK. In particular the proposals to increase the availability of finance for small and medium-sized enterprises and the enterprise management incentive scheme have the potential to be of real value to growth firms in the UK."

## Business Today

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## Revolution by Marks

A marketing change of culture

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STOCK MARKET INDEXES	
FTSE 100	6215.5 (+3.8)
Yard	2,592
FTSE All Share	2865.81 (+4.68)
Nikkei	15490.00 (+382.30)
New York	8708.02 (+15.20*)
DAX	1275.59 (-1.25*)

LIBOR	
Federal Funds	4.0%
Long bond	5.5%
Yield	5.89% (5.87%)

LONDON MONEY	
3-mth interbank	5.5% (5.4%)
Libor long gilt future (Jun)	116.19 (115.63)

STERLING	
New York	1.6292* (1.6178)
London	1.6274 (1.6148)
€	1.6057 (1.6032)
SFr	2.2780 (2.2553)
¥	127.59 (127.55)
E Index	102.7 (102.5)

U.S. DOLLAR	
London	1.0988* (1.0987)
€	1.0988 (1.0987)
¥	119.07 (121.06)
S Index	108.1 (108.7)

NORTH SEA OIL	
Brent 15-day (Mar)	512.10 (\$11.75)
—	—

\* denotes midday trading prices  
Exchange rates Page 28

## BNP stuns rivals with audacious £22bn bid

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

FRANCE's banking sector was in shock yesterday after Banque Nationale de Paris (BNP) launched a hostile F220 billion (£22.7 billion) bid to take over two of its biggest rivals, Société Générale and Paribas, themselves in merger talks.

The move would create the world's biggest bank in terms of assets of £672 billion, and third-biggest in terms of its stock market capitalisation of more than £30 billion.

But with the three institutions employing a total of about 4,650 people in the City, hundreds of jobs in London would be under threat. The board of Paribas is to meet today to discuss the bid, while

the Société Générale board is to meet on Friday. An insider said: "A three-way deal looks unlikely. BNP would either merge with Paribas or with Société Générale."

European Union competition authorities are certain to scrutinise a takeover that stunned a Paris business community unaccustomed to such predatory attacks. A French government source said that the deal, if it went ahead, would be given the green light in Paris and Brussels. "There is no difficulty about monopolies. There would still be other banks in France," the source said. "What's the problem?"

Yesterday André Lévy-Lang, the chairman of Paribas, and Daniel Bonton, chairman of Société Générale, who last month announced proposals to merge their banks and create SG Paribas, dismissed the BNP bid as "adventurous".

"We each studied carefully the possibility of a link-up with BNP. This option was dis-

missed," they said.

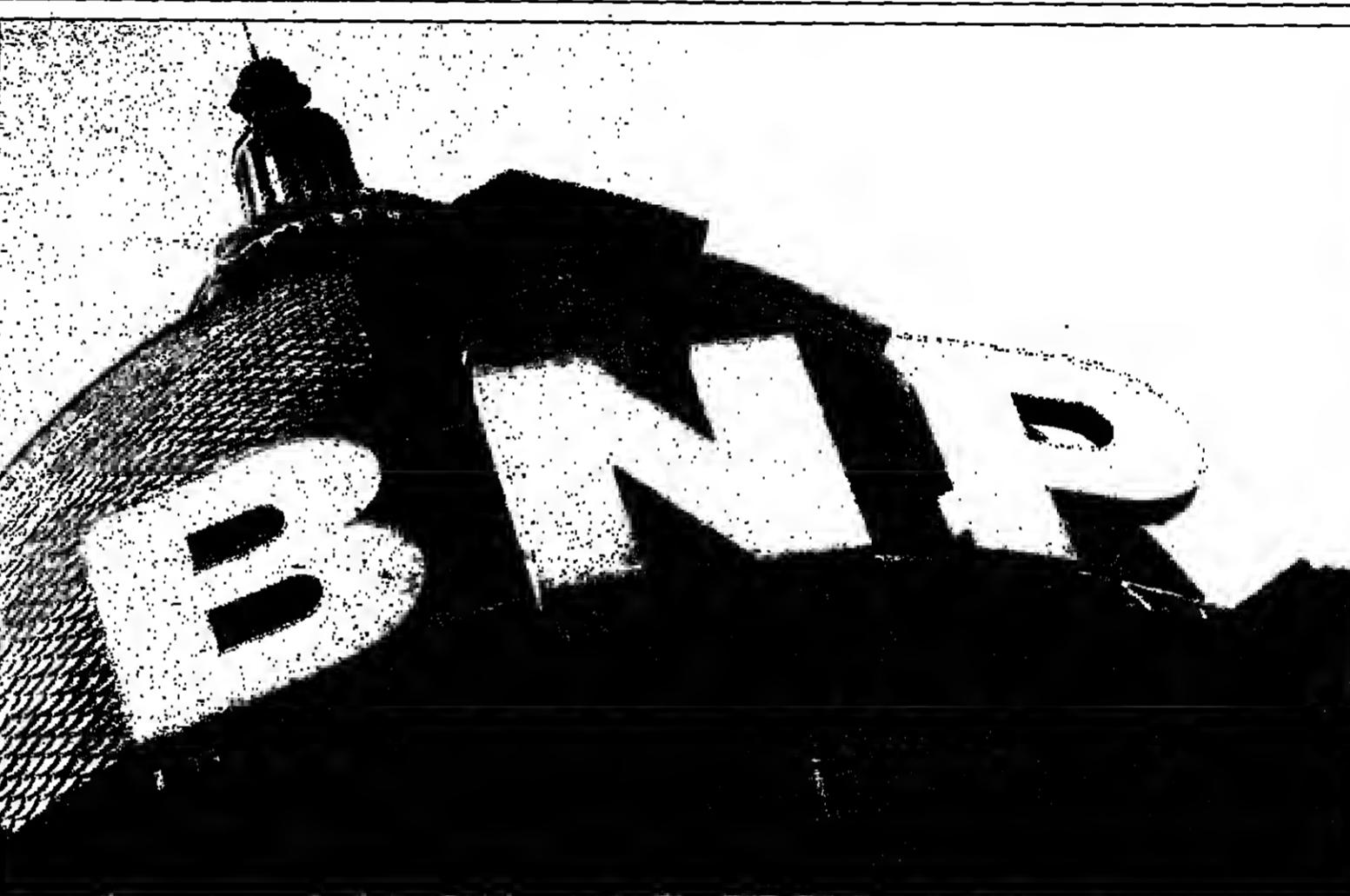
But AXA, the insurance group that is headed by Claude Bebear and is BNP's largest shareholder, is supporting the bid. AXA is also an important shareholder in Paribas, and originally favoured a merger between BNP and Paribas. AXA recently acquired Guardian Royal Exchange in the UK for £3.3 billion.

BNP's offer of 15 shares for every Société Générale share, and 11 for eight Paribas shares implies a 14 per cent premium for Société Générale shareholders. AXA, which has 18 per cent of Paribas' shares, would benefit.

Michel Pebeau, chairman of BNP, said: "Our project is to create a European banking champion."

Société Générale and Paribas, which each employ 2,000 people in the City, were planning to lay off a total of about 900 under their merger plans. BNP, which has 650 employees in London, is likely to shed more jobs.

Commentary, page 29



## Pearson poised to seek share listing on Wall Street

BY RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

PEARSON, the media and information group, is considering seeking a New York share listing.

Margorie Scardino, chief executive, said a dual listing in London and on Wall Street was appropriate following the £2.7 billion acquisition of the educational and business publishing interests of Simon & Schuster, with half of Pearson's business and 50 per cent of employees now based in America.

The possibility of a New York listing was raised as Pearson announced record operating profits of £389 million, a rise of 19 per cent before goodwill and exceptionalities for 1998. Adjusted earnings per share rose by 20 per cent to 42p and the trading margin increased from 11.5 per cent to 13.1 per cent — fulfilling Mrs Scardino's promise to create double-digit earnings growth.

Despite the record profits Pearson shares fell 85p to £13.37 on profit-taking after a strong run.

Pearson also said yesterday that it was spending £14 million on a compre-

hensive bonus for 13,000 eligible mem-

bers of staff.

Mrs Scardino also gave some details of planned investments for the coming year, including a £30 million investment in the FT Group, £20 million in new programmes for Pearson Television and \$400 million (£245 million) in new educational products, particularly for the US market.

The Pearson chief executive yesterday emphasised how in the past two years the company had been turned into a group focused on four businesses — Pearson TV, Pearson Education, FT Group and Penguin Group.

In 1998, Pearson more than doubled operating cashflow from £159 million to £392 million on a turnover up 4 per cent to £2.59 billion.

The total dividend rises 8 per cent to 21p a share with a 15p final, payable from adjusted earnings of 42p a share, up from 34.9p.

Commentary, page 29

## M&S cuts number of UK goods

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM  
RETAIL CORRESPONDENT

MARKS & SPENCER has admitted that it expects the proportion of its goods sourced from the UK to drop to just 50 per cent.

James Benfield, who has been appointed to the new role of UK marketing and operations director, said: "I don't think it'll be that long before we end up at an even split." The company sources 65 to 70 per cent of its goods from the UK. In 1990, it sourced 90 per cent from the UK.

Mr Benfield admitted that customer reaction is not always positive, saying: "There are certain parts of the country where it is a big issue. We have really agonised over the 'Made in Britain' thing. It has been very tortuous."

However, he said that there had been benefits from the switch, including an overall reduction of 3 per cent on prices.

Marketing man, page 31

## Financial services firms hit by VAT on outsourcing

By JASON NISSE

FINANCIAL services firms will have to pay hundreds of millions of pounds in extra VAT under a change in the rules on outsourcing slipped into the provisions of the Budget yesterday.

The move, which contradicts Gordon Brown's statement in the Budget that he was not widening the scope of VAT, could change the profit structure for many credit card firms and lead to increased charges for consumers.

A Statutory Instrument titled VAT (Finance) and Number 1999/95 was lodged in the House of Commons library on Tuesday afternoon — while the Chancellor was speaking — detailing the changes to the VAT regime.

According to Marc Welby, a tax partner at Ernst & Young, the accountants, the notice redefines deals to outsource the running of credit cards, debit cards and other credit management contracts, which were VAT exempt.

Deals running into billions of pounds will be affected. The largest managers of credit card services are First Data Re-

source in Southend-on-Sea, Essex, which manages credit cards for many high street banks. Other leading firms include Bank of Scotland, which runs card services for many smaller operators, and EDS, which has a large contract with Royal Bank of Scotland.

The move will also hit high street stores, football clubs and specialist organisations, such as Saga, which issue their own affinity cards.

Mr Welby said that he would not be surprised if the move did not bring in more than £100 million of extra VAT a year for Customs & Excise. He also predicted the move would lead to legal actions from banks and card management companies, which would challenge attempts to extend the scope of VAT.

If the extra VAT was levied, the extra cost would almost certainly hit consumers through higher interest rates or charges on their credit transactions.

Customs & Excise was yesterday unable to detail how the change would affect credit card companies.

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## THE IMPACT OF BUDGET 99

# Brown left with limited room for manoeuvre

By ALASDAIR MURRAY, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE Budget has left Gordon Brown with an even smaller margin for error if the Chancellor is to meet his own tough borrowing guidelines, a leading economics think-tank claimed yesterday.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies said that with part of the funding for extra spending and tax cuts provided by a reduction in one of the Treasury's contingency funds, the Chancellor was leaving little room for manoeuvre if economic growth comes in below target.

The IFS also confirmed the City's suspicion that the Budget, which promised tax cuts and extra spending, had actually resulted in a loosening of the Government's fiscal stance over the next three years.

## Share threat to pensions

PLANS for a new all-employee share scheme could undermine the Government's drive to promote and support company pensions, experts said yesterday (Susan Emmet writes).

Proposals unveiled in the Budget include tax breaks for new share ownership schemes which are far more generous to both employers and employees than those currently available for company pension schemes.

According to Bacon & Woodrow, the actuary, individuals could benefit by as much as 20 per cent after tax by investing in the share scheme rather than the pension. Raj Modi, senior consultant at Bacon & Woodrow, said this incentive may encourage staff to divert funds to the new scheme, undermining company pensions.

As with occupational pensions, employees can contribute to the new share scheme from pre-tax earnings. But unlike pensions, earnings from the share scheme will be taxed according to the length of time that the investment is held.

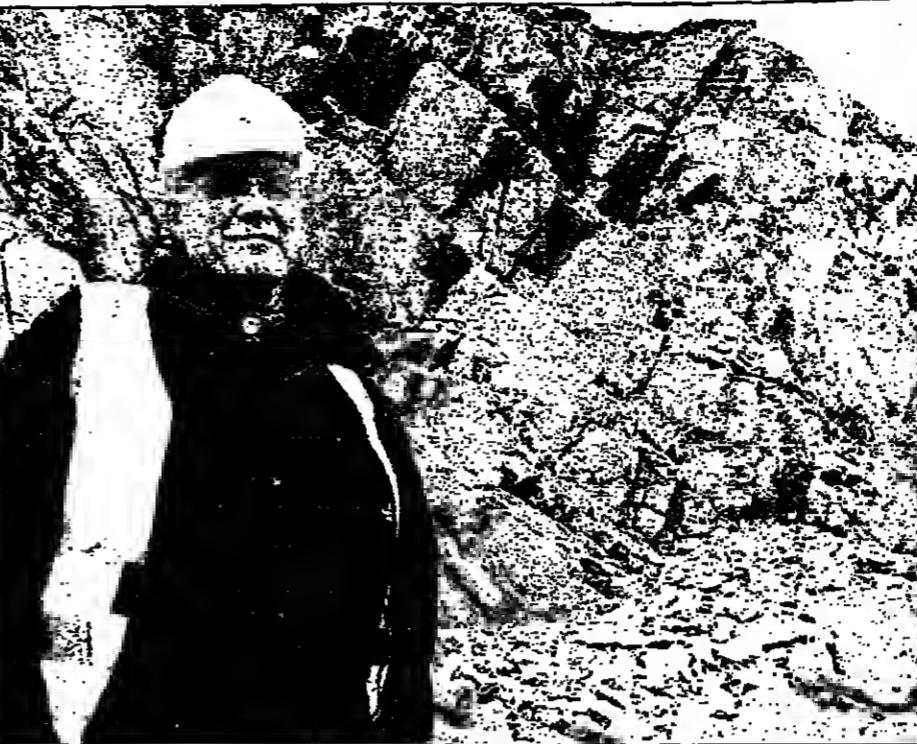
"a genuine contraction of real core spending".

However, the Chancellor yesterday defended the Budget measures against accusations that they could force the Bank of England to postpone further interest rate cuts.

Mr Brown insisted that the overall fiscal stance was actually tighter in the next financial year as previously announced tax cuts come into effect and because of a downward revision to spending plans.

Mr Brown's arguments won some support among City analysts. Michael Saunders, UK economist at Salomon Brothers, Clitheroe, said: "By keeping a cautious fiscal stance, the Chancellor is ensuring that base rates can fall further if inflation undershoots the Bank of England's forecast."

The markets, however, continued to ignore the Chancellor's protestations, sending the pound higher as traders concluded that the Bank may now call a halt to interest rate cuts. Sterling rose more than a cent against the dollar to \$1.6272. The euro also slid modestly against the pound to 67.32p. Shares endured a directionless day with the FTSE 100 index closing up just 3.8 points at 6,241.5.



Piling up: Aggregate Industries, the building materials supplier, has reported a 68 per cent jump in pre-tax profits to £16.1 million for 1998. Peter Tom, above, the chief executive, said the environment was expected to remain buoyant and Aggregate still had enough financial firepower for further acquisitions.

A final dividend of 1.26p was declared, taking the year's payout to 2.1p, up 5 per cent. Aggregate's US businesses, which account for 45 per cent of its revenue, enjoyed volume rises of about 14 per cent in the past year.

Tempus, page 30

## Holmes Place jumps 5%

Shares in Holmes Place, the health and fitness club operator, jumped almost 5 per cent yesterday after the group reported a 34 per cent rise in 1998 pre-tax profits to £7.25 million.

The group, which doubled its number of clubs to 26 during the year, said demand was showing "no sign of abatement" and it plans ten openings this year, including five in Switzerland.

Turnover was up 44 per cent to £37.2 million, while like-for-like sales in existing clubs rose 17 per cent. Earnings per share reached 3.6p (3.06p) and a final dividend of 2.0p makes a total for the year of 3.5p (3.0p). The results pushed its shares 14p higher to 316.5p.

### Ladbroke split

Ladbroke Group, which is close to completing a £1.5 billion takeover of Stakis, confirmed yesterday that it will not replace Mike Smith, head of its betting and gaming division, when he leaves to become chief executive of Rank on April 1. Instead, the division has been split into three parts – European betting, UK casinos and international gaming – each of which will report directly to Peter George.

Ladbroke's chief executive, said directors' pay was to fall £700,000, with his own salary cut by £100,000 to £100,000. Hamish Grossart, deputy chairman, is to become a non-executive director, reducing his pay from £360,000 to £40,000. The other non-executives have agreed to 10 per cent pay cuts.

Mr Gammell, whose pay almost reached £1 million in 1997, when Cairn shares soared on hopes that Cairn's Bangladeshi gas discoveries would lead to a bonanza, said: "I believe in incentive-type awards. With a low oil price and when you are reducing your staff you should lead from the front."

## Cairn directors' pay cut

By CARL MORTISHED  
INTERNATIONAL  
BUSINESS EDITOR

DIRECTORS of Cairn Energy are taking a pay cut after a disastrous year in which the oil explorer suffered a share price slump and allegations of boardroom extravagance.

Cairn yesterday reported an 87 per cent collapse in operating profits in 1998 to £21 million, and said it was making

more than half of its 165 staff redundant, as well as closing its Sydney office and writing off £73 million in North Sea assets.

Bill Gammell, chief executive, said directors' pay was to fall £700,000, with his own salary cut by £100,000 to £100,000.

Hamish Grossart, deputy chairman, is to become a non-executive director, reducing his pay from £360,000 to

£40,000. The other non-executives have agreed to 10 per cent pay cuts.

Mr Gammell, whose pay almost reached £1 million in 1997, when Cairn shares soared on hopes that Cairn's Bangladeshi gas discoveries would lead to a bonanza, said: "I believe in incentive-type awards. With a low oil price and when you are reducing your staff you should lead from the front."

### European terms

European Leisure, the snooker and nightclubs group, is to-day expected to unveil the terms of its proposed nil-premium £50 million merger with Affiliated Leisure, the Burger King restaurants and ten-pin bowling operator. However, Waterfall Holdings, a rival cue sports operator in which European has a 23.9 per cent stake, is also thought to have belatedly expressed an interest in a merger with European.

### Ambibus growth

The Ambibus Pub Company has acquired a package of nine pubs from JD Wetherspoon for £4.65 million, taking the AIM-listed operator's total estate to 50. The nine pubs, eight of them within the M25, made a profit of £32,000 in the year to July 1998. Last June Ambibus bought ten pubs from Wetherspoon.

### SFA chief moves

Chris Woodburn, aged 51, the chief executive of the Securities and Futures Authority, is to leave his job and take charge of the General Insurance Standards Council next month. The GISC was set up last July to cover anyone who sells general insurance.

## Mowlem on time for millennium

TRAINING have started to run on a trial basis, on the new extension of the London Docklands Light Railway to Lewisham, John Mowlem, the construction company said yesterday (Robert Cole writes).

Mowlem, which is building the link beneath the Thames between Canary Wharf and Greenwich, said: "The first trial trains have begun on schedule, some 30 months after construction began."

When the first stage of the DLR was developed it was dogged by delays. The update on the DLR, due to open before the millennium, came as Mowlem revealed it had returned to the black last year. In 1998 it made taxable profits of £9.4 million.

The final dividend is 3p, against 2.5p last time, making a total for the year of 5p (4p).

Tempus page 30

### EXCHANGE RATES

	Bank	Bank	Bank	Banks
Australia \$.....	2.05	2.43	210.33	192.60
Austria Sch.....	23.42	19.76	0.674	0.615
Belgium Fr.....	83.07	58.12	3.81	3.73
Canada \$.....	2.05	2.43	1.17	1.03
Cyprus Cyp.....	0.9033	0.8318	13.28	12.34
Denmark Kr.....	11.82	10.73	310.10	288.07
Egypt £.....	6.75	5.14	1.00	0.97
Fiji £.....	9.21	9.43	258.46	238.97
France Fr.....	10.21	9.43	14.00	12.90
Germany Dm.....	3.089	2.824	2.927	2.905
Greece Dr.....	503	464	602.12	561.15
Hong Kong \$.....	13.48	12.97	1.734	1.591
Iceland kr.....	1.22	1.09		
Indonesia .....	15.71	13.71		
Ireland £.....	1.2234	1.1344		
Irael Shek.....	6.89	6.23		
Iraqi Dinar.....	3049	2612		

Rates for small denominations only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveler's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

THE TIMES

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CHANGING TIMES

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**D**e-politicising competition policy is a laudable aim. Peter Mandelson in his brief reign at the DTI was minded to absolve himself from having to give the final word on sensitive commercial issues and Stephen Byers is similarly inclined.

Industry and the City would surely applaud such a move as a step towards bringing more clarity to this cloudy area – but only the first step. That a Secretary of State should be able to veto any merger that has been given the blessing of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission piles an extra layer of unpredictability on top of a process whose outcome is already notoriously difficult to predict.

Companies can pay the best lawyers to weigh up the prospect of a deal being allowed through, take guidance from the Office of Fair Trading and still find that the MMC gives them the thumbs down. It happened to Littlewoods and Freemans, the Sears subsidiary; it happened to Ladbrooke and Coral. So confident was Ladbrooke that it that it would win approval for the deal that it made its purchase unconditional. Yet in both cases the MMC said no.

Such aborted trips to the altar are expensive in every way. Not only are there the inevitable professional fees which clock up whether or not success is achieved but there is also the unquantifiable effect on both parties of having so much of their

senior executives' time deflected down a dead end.

A more predictable official attitude towards mergers could only benefit corporate efficiency. But while the members of the MMC may be well informed and astute as well as great and good, it is not always clear how they will decide whether or not a deal is in the public interest. Mr Byers's consultation paper on competition policy should take the opportunity to examine this question closely.

Now is a particularly pertinent time to question whether potential monopolies should be judged solely in terms of the national marketplace. In France we have the prospect of a vast banking organisation being concocted by the coming together of three leading houses. The chances of the French authorities ruling out such a deal seem slight. The French admire national champions.

Yet the prospect of Barclays merging with NatWest was greeted with howls of derision on the grounds that the competition authorities would not countenance such a deal.

If Britain is to continue playing on the global stage we may have to rethink such ideas.

## Byers on tightrope of competition

**S**tephen Byers launched his own mini-budget for business yesterday just as he put realists on notice that the Government intended a crackdown on pricing.

Some may say that it is hard to act for both causes. But that is not necessarily the case if the weapon used to fight for both is competition. Mr Byers is using the demands of competition to bear down on anti-competitive retailers while trying to raise the competitiveness of small businesses.

That way they will do better business and ultimately provide more competition in the markets in which they operate. The consumer would benefit both ways and business would be encouraged to take sharper rather than be lazy and use sharp practice.

Mr Byers' measures for business are aimed at the smaller companies and start-ups - the area of com-

merce which is rightly seen as one of the key driving forces of economic growth and competitiveness.

He is giving small businesses a stronger voice, tax breaks for research and development, guarantees that the Government is doing its job on delivering competitive assistance – as outlined in the Competitiveness White Paper, and looking at ways to help those who have failed go back into business.

This last move will be made by a review of bankruptcy and insolvency law. Small businesses will also, in time, have their lives made easier by a relaxation of corporate law, allowing them to function with less red tape than their larger counterparts.

There is, of course, the danger that too much relaxation will lead to a rogue's charter. But there is the equal danger that over-regulation can kill nascent businesses before they have had the chance to take their first, potentially successful steps.

Regulation is, however, crucial

for large businesses which have a strong grip on a large number of consumers. Step forward the car dealers, supermarkets and drugs companies which are under Office of Fair Trading investigation and have triggered the Government's onslaught on competition policy.

If Mr Byers can pull off these dual acts of being champion of the consumer and champion of business he will be delivering some traditional Labour values in a new Labour pro-business way.

If he is successful on both counts he will have notched up a rare victory, and one that will assure him a longer tenure at the DTI than many of his predecessors.

The right motivation from Scardino

**W**hen personnel directors metamorphosed into directors of human resources they may have felt their sta-

tus was somehow enhanced. But the name change had a subtle subtlety that was oh, so Eighties. Employees had become just another asset along with machinery and fleet cars. Human resources could be expanded or downsized depending on market conditions. They could be bought and sold as huge city signing on fees demonstrated, and they could be terminated.

When Marjorie Scardino decided that what Pearson needed was not a director of human resources but a director for people, it signalled a very different attitude. The fact that she gave the job to David Bell, who had previously been chief executive of the Financial Times, underlined the seriousness with which she endows the role. People, reasons Mrs Scardino, are the most important asset Pearson has and she intends that they should be well nurtured.

The news that underlying profits at the media group rose by 19 per cent last year indicates that her people are responding as she had hoped. Strong performances in television and text books helped towards the record profits and there should be much more to come as the group reaps the rewards of its Simon & Schuster acquisition last

year. The scope for educational publishing to grow, both in the US and Europe, should help Mrs Scardino easily to make her target of double-digit earnings growth. That prospect, however, was not enough to stop the profit-takers pummelling the share price yesterday.

The company shares the Chancellor's view that shareholding staff are motivated staff. Investors have every reason to applaud the attitude. They should also be ready to accept that senior people deserve a slap on the back as well when they produce outstanding results. Mrs Scardino must be in line for a hefty bonus on last year's annual salary of £375,000.

Let there be no carpings from those who have ridden the shares in their recent surge but must now accept a less rosy rating.

## Labour of luvvie

**C**ARLTON'S Michael Green was looking exposed. With Granada, Yorkshire, Tyne-Tees, Anglia and Meridian TV stations all controlled by Labour supporters almost indecently close to Tony Blair, the old Thatcher favourite could expect no favours when he needed them. But with one bound he is suddenly free. By buying Planet 24 and installing Waheed Ali as Carlton head of production, he has a fine working Labour peer to match Lord Hollick and Gerry Robinson. But what about the viewers?

## Albright keen on Solutia division

BY PAUL DURMAN

**A**LBRIGHT & WILSON, the chemicals company that looks set to be taken over, is still pursuing plans to acquire the phosphates arm of Solutia, the US chemicals group that was formerly part of Monsanto.

Albright has recommended a £408 million offer from Albemarle Corporation of the US, but Rhône of France is contemplating making a higher offer.

Paul Rocheleau, Albright's chief executive, said Albemarle had said it would support its strategy. The Solutia business is regarded as an excellent fit with Albright's own phosphates business.

Any rival bidders will have to recognise that Albright, with 30 per cent of its £815 million sales in the UK, is still facing tough trading conditions. Comparable pre-tax profits fell 20 per cent last year to £48.3 million.

The fall was mostly blamed on the strength of sterling and Asian devaluations, which cost £7 million, and reduced exports to Asia Pacific, which cost £6 million. The phosphorus derivatives and acrylics division was worst hit, its profits falling by a third to £15.5 million because of reduced Asian exports and lower sales of flame retardants.

Mr Rocheleau said most of the group has made progress in recent years, but UK profits have fallen from almost £40 million to only £11.6 million since 1995. He said consumer products customers have moved their own production to the Continent to seek easier distribution.

The company intends to maintain its four facilities in the UK, but it will press ahead with the productivity improvements that have led UK staff numbers to fall by 600 to 1,600 over the past four years.

Albright wrote off £1.1 million of due diligence costs incurred on two aborted acquisitions.

Albright's shares were unchanged at 140p. It is paying a final dividend of 4.8p to maintain the full-year payout at 7.15p a share.

## Cordiant sets sights on big targets in US

BY RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

**C**ORDIANT Communications, the international advertising group, says it is planning to make a number of significant acquisitions in the marketing industry, with its sights likely to be set on targets in the United States.

Michael Bungay, chief executive of Cordiant, which demerged from the old Saatchi & Saatchi in 1997, said yesterday he was interested in expanding into everything in the sector: from database marketing and sales promotion to design and public relations.

It is likely that the expansion will come in the form of two or three significant acquisitions either this year or next, with the deals being funded, the company hopes, by a rise in its own share price.

Mr Bungay was speaking as Cordiant announced a 19.9 per cent increase in pre-tax profit in 1998 to £29.9 million at constant exchange rates –

the first full year since the demerger.

"We have flourished since

demerger. We in the ground

running in 1998 and prospects are looking strong," Mr Bungay said. He added that few commentators gave Cordiant much chance of independent survival at the time of the split.

The share price rose 41p to 164.5p yesterday. This week, the stockbrokers West LB put more value on the company at 194p per share.

Operating margins rose to 8.6 per cent compared with a pro forma 7.8 per cent last time and Mr Bungay said the company was on track to reach its target of delivering a 10 per cent margin this year.

Analysts are looking for a special incentive scheme, into about £32.5 million pre-tax profit this year.

The proposed dividend of 1.4p a share represents an increase of 16.7 per cent.

## Electra to update valuation

THE battle over the future of the Electra Investment Trust, the £1.2 billion venture capital fund, will be rejoined today with publication of an updated asset valuation (Robert Cole writes).

Publication of the statistic is likely to spark a row between Electra and 3i, the rival venture capital investment fund that wants to acquire Electra.

Analysts reckons that Electra will say it is worth at least 760p a share, well above the 689p share price and well in advance of the 705p a share that 3i said last month it was prepared to pitch a takeover bid.

## Bowthorpe plans high-tech spend

BY ADAM JONES

**B**OWTHORPE, the electronics group whose products range from wheelchair power packs to "black box" flight recorders, may spend up to £150 million on acquisitions to continue its growth in high-tech markets.

Bowthorpe reported 1998 pre-tax profits of £92.1 million yesterday, up 8 per cent on 1997. Sales rose 9 per cent to £87.6 million.

Nicholas Brookes, chief executive, highlighted the growth in demand for the testing equipment Bowthorpe sells to telecommunications companies such as Motorola and AT&T. Profits in the relevant

division rose nearly 50 per cent. The growth offset weakening sales in the Far East.

Bowthorpe has applied to be allowed to offer American Depository Receipts to US investors. Although the US accounts for 42 per cent of operating profit, only about 2 per cent of the company is owned by American investors.

Diluted earnings per share were 26.62p (26.16p). A final dividend of 8.58p has been declared, making a total of 12.28p, up 9 per cent on 1997. The shares rose from 415p to 422.4p.

Tempus, page 30

## Bank plan to save F1 eurobond

## Matalan looks at home insurance

BY FRASER NELSON

**F**INANCIERS at WestLB, the German merchant bank, are trying to put together a deal to rescue the \$1.4 billion (£860 million) eurobond being issued by Formula One Administration, Beagle Ecclastone's company which runs the sport (Jason Nisbet).

The proposal from WestLB to join Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, the US investment bank, in underwriting the troubled bond issue and then selling it on to a small number of investors is understood to have been put to the board of the bank. WestLB hopes the bond can be issued early next month.

Angus Monro, chief executive of Matalan, said that he had so far turned down approaches from a string of insurers that had sought access to its regular customers.

He said: "We've been offered lots of money by lots of people. A database with 3.4 million entries is a very power-

ful tool, but we will do this in our own time."

Matalan's shares, which floated 235p last May, jumped 98p to 55p yesterday as it returned pre-tax profits up 79 per cent to £22.7 million for the year to January 2 – well ahead of City expectations.

Like-for-like sales were up by 5.9 per cent.

Earnings were 19.4p (11.8p) per share and the maiden dividend is 5.5p a share. This delivers £1.66 million for John Hargreaves, chairman, who still owns 36.1 per cent of the shares.

Tempus, page 30

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## STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

# FTSE edges ahead as the big guns are reshuffled

**S**IZE does matter in the stock market. The bigger you are, the bigger you get. At least, that is the theory.

Yesterday's quarterly reshuffle of the constituents that make up the top 100 held few surprises. Those companies qualifying for the FTSE 100 index are the biggest in terms of capitalisation. So it was no surprise to see newcomers South African Breweries, 4p higher at 507p, and valued at almost £4 billion, and E.ON, 42p better at £15.975 (£4.5 billion) achieve FTSE status. They will now be bought by the index-tracker funds who must increase their weighting in the companies.

They will be joined by Emap, unchanged at £14.15, for the first time, having seen its price surge from the 800p level since October, and Misys, 25p better at 674p.

It will be second time round for Misys which was replaced by Gallaher, down 22p at 392p, last quarter. The tobacco company, however, has failed to consolidate its position and is dropping out, along with Safeway, up 7p at 245p, Tomkins, 7p dearer at 213p, and Williams, 5p higher at 370p.

The rest of the equity market wobbled in early trading as investors tried to make sense of the Chancellor's Budget and reflected on the overnight setback for Wall Street. There was an underlying fear that Gordon Brown had scuppered any prospects for another cut in interest rates.

But selling pressure was light and the losses were soon erased. The FTSE 100 index finished 3.8 up at 6,241.5 as a total of 1.13 billion shares changed hands.

There was a move to quality second-line stocks and this was reflected in the FTSE 250 index, up 33.3 at 5,409.0.

Brokers said demand was centred on industrial stocks that provided value for money or could possibly attract takeover attention. Leading the way was FKI, 9p better at 176p in heavy turnover of 9 million shares. A line of three million shares went through at 171p followed by a further 2.5 million at 170p.

Also on the move was IMI, 13p up at 276.4p, Senior Engineering, 6p up at 149p, and Delta, 1p firmer at 133p.

The surprise bid by Banque Nationale de Paris for rivals Paribas and Société Générale prompted a revival of specula-



John Gains saw Mowlem shares rise after the company returned to the black and lifted its payout by 25 per cent

tion about consolidation with in the UK domestic banking sector. NatWest ran up 5p to £14.13, Abbey National 62p to £13.25, Alliance & Leicester 39p to 333p, Barclays 50p to £18.14 and Lloyds TSB 22p to 940p. Even Northern Rock rose 5p to 521p on turnover of 1.26 million shares.

The retailers saw reasons to be cheerful in the wake of the

Budget. House of Fraser put

up 24p at 834p, while Storehouse was 1p better at 132p as HSBC Securities, the broker, upgraded from "reduce" to "hold". Dixons advanced another 22p to £12.90 buoyed by Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the broker, moving from "reduce" to "hold".

Caradon dropped 4p to 136p after HSBC Securities, the bro-

ker, cut its rating from "add" to "hold", having seen the price climb from a low of 884p since December. Instead, it prefers the look of Hepworth, up 5p at 171p, for which it has issued a "buy" recommendation ahead of results next week.

William Cathcart, chairman, has sold 600,000 shares in Avis Europe at 247p. It reduces his total holding to 225,329, or less than 1 per cent. Avis eased 2p to 2464p.

Independent Insurance continued to build on its week's results and share buying by directors with a rise of 16p to 2964p. Michael Bright, managing director, bought 190,000 shares on Tuesday, and Daniel Hodson, director, has since picked up a further 20,000 shares at 270p. He now holds 34,930. Goldman Sachs, the US securities house, is bullish on prospects.

Dennis Cope, chairman, has bought 52,000 shares in Fairview Holdings at 56p. He now owns 665,923, or 1/2 per cent. The shares rose 6p to 1004p.

A return to the black last year at John Mowlem was welcomed by the market, which marked the price 84p higher at 129p. The performance of the construction group, whose chief executive is John Gains, was made all the more palatable by a 25 per cent rise in the payout.

Spots Internet Group was chased 20p higher to 1354p as word went round that IG Index, the City betting organisation, may be reversed into it.

Recent reports have indicated that IG Index is ready to go public, but brokers say a move into an existing public company may be a cheaper way in. IG is also known to have been casting an eye over Zetters, the pools and bingo operator, down 16p to 1294p.

■ **GILT-EDGE:** Short covering enabled bond prices to recoup some of Tuesday's Budget-inspired losses. But the undertone remains cautious. There are fears the Chancellor may be forced to turn to the bond market to implement his £6 billion stimulus package for the economy. In the futures pit, the June series of the long gilt rose 5p to £116.19, while among conventional issues Treasury 9 per cent 2008 was 33p higher at £132.77.

■ **NEW YORK:** Shares traded at stable levels in the late-morning session. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was up 15.26 at 9,709.02.

Source: Datamonitor

DOG ENDS



TOBACCO shares have been left wheezing by the Chancellor's decision to stick 17p on a packet of 20 cigarettes. Claims that the move has been made on health grounds have fallen on deaf ears, naturally enough, among the smoking fraternity.

But now there are clouds hanging over the tobacco sector and none of them contains nicotine.

BAT Industries fell a further 8p to 549p in the wake of this week's profits setback and huge provi-

sions. Gallaher retreated 22p to 3924p as Goldman Sachs, the US securities house, reduced its rating on the shares from "market perform" to "market underperform".

Goldman has also lowered its rating on Imperial Tobacco, down 4p at 6774p, from "market outperform" to "market perform".

It is too early to see if the latest revenue increase will be enough to affect the bottom line, but with US litigation worries overhanging, the outlook remains bleak.

BAT Industries fell a further 8p to 549p in the wake of this week's profits setback and huge provi-

## MAJOR INDICES

## New York (midday)

Dow Jones ..... 7,002.02 (+15.26)

S&amp;P Composite ..... 1,278.39 (-1.25)

## Hong Kong

Nikkei Average ..... 15,480.00 (+303.30)

Hang Seng ..... 10,749.01 (+216.00)

## Amsterdam

AXP Index ..... 520.58 (-1.61)

DAX ..... 2,331.4 (+10.61)

## Frankfurt

DAX ..... 4,721.41 (-37.09)

## Singapore

Straits ..... 1,469.53 (+29.01)

## Brussels

BEL 20 ..... 3,277.54 (-27.89)

## Paris

CAC-40 ..... 4,162.31 (+2.51)

## Zurich

SMI Index ..... 7,293.4 (-57.8)

## London

FT 30 ..... 3,805.1 (+30.8)

FTSE 100 ..... 3,241.5 (+3.38)

FTSE 250 ..... 5,049.5 (+1.38)

FTSE 500 ..... 2,893.5 (-4.4)

FTSE Europan 100 ..... 2,653.75 (-1.48)

FTSE All-Shares ..... 2,685.81 (+0.88)

FTSE Non Financials ..... 2,085.39 (-5.02)

FTSE Small Int'l ..... 1,532.39 (-1.25)

FTSE 1000 ..... 11,274.7 (-0.24)

Bourses ..... 5,971

SEAS Volume ..... 1,141.46

SEAS Value ..... 1,627.22 (+0.0123)

Euro ..... 6,673.22 (-0.0011)

Sterling ..... 1,745.00 (-0.1745)

Exchange Index ..... 102.7 (-0.001)

Bank of England official deposit (4pm) ..... 163.4 Jan (2.4%) Jan 1997 - 100

PPI ..... 161.0 Jan (2.6%) Jan 1997 - 100

RPI ..... 163.4 Jan (2.6%) Jan 1997 - 100

## RECENT ISSUES

## Closes

Cross Bros Der VCT ..... 100

Enhanced Zero Trust ..... 100½

Gender Properties ..... 7½

Jupiter En Zero Div Pl ..... 107½

Jupiter Enhanced Inc ..... 99½

Luminor Warrants ..... 27½

NBA Quantum ..... 110

Sports Internet ..... 135½

Syntex ..... 126

- 3

## RISES:

## Stock

Close ..... 100

Change ..... +104½

Chg % ..... +26.9

ASW ..... 16

Feijen Bank Y ..... 304

Finsbury ..... 74

Lon Foraging ..... 74

Durham ..... 169½

Lambert Beverage ..... 215

THE TIMES THURSDAY MARCH 11 1999

**W**hy is it that Gordon Brown arouses all one's deepest distrust and suspicion, even when he appears to be doing the right thing?

Maybe it is that overwhelming arrogance that was on show again on Tuesday. It conveys, with an implied put-down to all corners, that he alone understands the nation's finances; that he is undoubtedly the greatest Chancellor since Gladstone and probably the best ever.

Arrogance may not be attractive, but is not unknown among previous Chancellors. Such mastery can even help to build confidence if it is justified, as Mr Brown's appears to be so far. The drawback is that lesser folk tend to pounce delightedly on mistakes, such as the £5 billion a year tax on pensions. As Lord Lawson can testify, your inevitable if unworthy enemies await your downfall with glee.

Perhaps it is that puritan self-righteousness. From the utility levies onwards, Mr Brown has always sought to convert the mundane process of raising money from us to fund the public spend-

## Brown's £3.5 billion millennium bug



ing we voted for him a Robin Hood crusade. He will stamp out evil by taxing it and distribute the proceeds of social crime among worthy charitable causes. In a phrase beloved of environmental campaigners, he claims to "tax bads to help goods".

We are used to Chancellors being hypocritical over tobacco or drinks duties. These drugs are supposedly taxed to discourage demand but actually because demand is unresponsive to price, allowing huge sums to be raised from sinful volunteers. Mr Brown carries this pretence to absurdity.

The pension tax was labelled as an investment incentive. A £1.5 billion extra impost on petrol is morally matched by a £50 million rise in subsidies for rural buses and the introduction of capital allowances and tax-free mileage allowances for those who use their bicy-

cles for business purposes. Sadly, you would have to keep up an average speed of 27 mph to pedal your way to the minimum wage.

The 1998 Financial Statement and Budget Report was titled *New Ambitions for Britain*. This year's is *Budget 99: Building a Stronger Economic Future for Britain*. Both these dry statistical tomes have glossy covers showing happy smiling children. Inside, abolition of married couples allowance is categorised as "Building a Fairer Society". Imposing extra national insurance contributions on higher-middle earners counts as "Increasing Employment Opportunity".

These affectations are certainly annoying, but the fatal flaw in Mr Brown's more basic. Behind the intellectual mastery and the cloying parade of virtue, he is just another clever confidence trickster. The key to his Budget-making is to allocate

prime method used by creative accountants to paint the false impression of steadily rising profits. In the company sector, the Accounting Standards Board has taken almost a decade to stamp out such abuse. In Gordon Brown's Treasury, it is rising to new heights.

Most noticed that the 10p tax rate announced on Tuesday will come in April, but that the standard rate will come down to 22 per cent only next year. Married couples allowance and mortgage interest relief will not be abolished until April 2000, the new child tax credit will not arrive until April 2001 and the new tax regime for company cars only in April 2002.

Nothing wrong with advance notice, you may think. It helps people to plan ahead sensibly. What it actually does is to drop these measures into a predestination black hole. They are not part of this

year's Budget measures. But they are not part of the Millennium year Budget measures or those for 2002 either, because they enact measures announced long ago.

The effect is sensational. While Budget losers and the querulous will always complain, everyone could agree that it cut taxes overall. In that misleading phrase it was a giveaway Budget, albeit responsibly so. Our Chancellor managed to cut taxes yet boost both spending and the current surplus.

There is it in black, white and pink in *Budget 99*. The effect of all the Budget measures add up to a £1.07 billion cut in Exchequer revenue in the year 1999-2000, after indexing taxes and allowances for inflation. The cuts build up to £1.49 billion in 2000-2001 and £3.56 billion in 2001-2002. Or so it seems.

Other tables show the impact of tax changes the Chancellor an-

nounced earlier, sometimes years earlier, which not yet come into effect. They include higher fuel duties, previous cuts in allowances and taxing dividends in Peps. Together, these will raise taxes by £3.59 billion in 1999-2000, by £4.91 billion in 2000-2001 and by £7.64 billion in 2001-2002.

These are not previous tax measures. They are imposts announced in advance, new taxes. And they are much bigger than the cuts paraded on Tuesday. Overall, Mr Brown's Budget measures will put our taxes up by a net £2.5 billion in the next fiscal year and by £3.5 billion in the Millennium year. In 2001-2002, taxes would rise by £4.1 billion, except that the Chancellor could announce three more sets of measures before then.

Fair enough if the Government was honest about it. But it prefers creative accounting to make it appear that taxes are falling.

The last Budget of the Millennium was made by the last great man of the Millennium. Mr Brown himself is Britain's most costly Millennium bug.

## Marks & Spencer readies itself for a marketing revolution

A huge change of culture is in store at M&S, says Sarah Cunningham

**J**ames Benfield faces a mammoth task. After 28 years with the business, he has just been made UK marketing director of Marks & Spencer at probably the most difficult juncture in its history. Throughout his career at M&S, it has been not just a tremendously successful company, but a national institution on a par in the public's affection with the BBC. But now the business is struggling to deal with the aftermath of a disastrous fall in sales and a spectacular boardroom bust-up.

To make his task even harder, Benfield has to deal with the fact that the group has not traditionally bothered a great deal about marketing. It has relied on its loyal customer base, its reputation and its stores. Who needs fancy adverts? The public was so used to the idea that M&S did not need to advertise that when TV ads appeared at Christmas in an effort to clear unsold stock, they made newspaper headlines.

The "we don't need to advertise" attitude, which Benfield puts down to modesty — and others interpreted as arrogance — has already changed. As Benfield said: "In a world in which there is a cacophony of sound, whispering about what we do is not enough. Unless we start getting our message across, we deserve what happens to us."

The first issue that Benfield, who is also responsible for UK operations, is addressing is merchandising within stores: improving layout, the ways that goods are presented on the rails, labelling and pricing. The second issue will be advertising to the world outside the stores.

M&S is currently headlining some media horseshoes, probably at the level just below Benfield. It is also possible, though, that someone will be recruited at director level.

"We're looking for someone with experience of taking on a well-known brand and reinvig-



James Benfield is the man charged by Marks & Spencer with transmitting his passion for the product to the public

orating it. Someone who may have worked in the ad world, and in new media. We may need more than one person," he said.

All types of advertising are up for consideration, from television to the Internet, and the first results of the new thinking should be seen in the near future. The message will be that M&S has more to offer than people think. Talking to customers has already established that "we have many product groups in which people don't know we do things", Benfield said. "Marks & Spencer should be able to surprise you."

Recent internal research by the company showed that only 5 per cent of customers leaving one of its largest stores, at Lakeside shopping centre in Essex, realised that it sold furniture.

The sort of changes that Benfield sees being introduced will be expensive, and so spending on marketing will rise, though he will not say by how much.

The company's new mantra of "everything is under review" includes the current advertising agency, BMP. The chance

to think up a whole new advertising approach for M&S is doubtless one that will be hotly pursued by the main agencies.

Tellingly, in all his years with the group, including the past six as a board member, Benfield has not done a press interview. Talking to the media was left almost entirely to Sir Richard Greenbury, who was chairman and chief executive until his deputy, Keith Oates, made a bid for his job. Sir Richard was moved upstairs to be non-executive chairman. Peter Salterbury, the new chief executive, has, like Benfield, worked at M&S his whole career, getting to know each department.

Until a few weeks ago, Salterbury had as little media exposure as Benfield. Under the new regime, the company wants to be open, but is also clearly scared of saying too much before things have been settled. One area that Benfield does not want to discuss is the brand strategy. All he will say is that "we're looking at all of it".

Walking around the flagship

Marble Arch store with Benfield yesterday, it was clear that — as an M&S man to the core — his passion is for product. He talks with unbounded enthusiasm about different high-tech yarns and their properties. He is immensely proud of the fact that, in the early Eighties, he introduced the world to M&S Duck a l'Orange.

Benfield, who is 49 and lives in North London with his wife, a former teacher, began his career in M&S's food department. There was a period of his life when he was getting up in the middle of the night to head off to New Covent Garden to buy vegetables, and he recalls once receiving the unenviable command from Derek Rayner (now Lord Rayner), a former chairman: "Sort out Israeli produce."

The enthusiasm for developing exciting new products was one of the things that, in retrospect, got M&S into trouble.

The process of getting high-tech fabrics to market is expensive and means that prices rose.

They have now been cut, by about 3 per cent overall, with one third of all products affected. "Some whole departments have had all their prices cut by 8 to 10 per cent," Benfield said. M&S jeans, for example, now sell at £20 rather than £23.

Getting prices down is no easy task, and can be done only by cutting the amount that M&S pays suppliers. That, in turn, means suppliers have had to move more of their production to countries where labour costs are much lower. "We've really agonised over the 'Made in Britain' thing," Benfield said. "It has been very tortuous."

While more than 90 per cent of Marks & Spencer goods were once made in Britain, the balance is now about 65 per cent UK, 35 per cent overseas.

"I don't think it'll be that long before we end up at an even split," Benfield said. "but we have to keep a proper balance between the UK and offshore."

The UK production side is essential to keep the stores stocked with some bestselling lines.

He admits that, because stores were so overstocked at the end

of last year after the company had badly miscalculated demand, far less has been ordered for the spring, and suppliers say that, so far, less has been ordered for autumn and winter. One result is that "we're going to be short of the fastest sellers this spring," Benfield said. "We're chasing goods."

Any solid revival in trading at Marks & Spencer is some way off, therefore. Sales cannot really pick up if the goods are not there to sell. As far as analysts are concerned, the risk is that M&S will go the way of Sainsbury's, which, though still very profitable, has failed to grow.

There is clearly no lack of effort at M&S though, and there is a refreshing willingness to admit that mistakes were made.

The activity at the "customer end" of the business is being matched by upheavals at the Baker Street headquarters.

**S**o far, 31 senior jobs have been cut, including three director positions. More job cuts at head office, possibly running into the hundreds, are expected in the next few weeks. Jobs are likely to go in areas where there is overlap between M&S and its suppliers. "We want to get rid of so much man-to-man marking between ourselves and our suppliers," Benfield said. "There is more that we can let suppliers do."

The strategy that is being adopted by M&S is being put into effect more quickly than some outsiders predicted. But the changes bring risks. To pay for the price cuts, the company not only has to get better deals with its suppliers, but also has to improve sales dramatically in the coming months.

Bringing in outsiders on marketing will also come as a shock to M&S. The reshuffle of senior management so far has been just that: no one new has yet been brought in. In fact, the last senior appointment of an outsider came when Mr Oates and Robert Colvill, the finance director, joined 15 years ago.

Just as Benfield was once told to sort out Israeli produce, and got on with it, so he is now determined to sort out UK marketing.

As for his record of success, if he had not sorted out Israeli produce he would not have this mammoth task today.

## Car industry puts brakes on merger mania

**T**he merry-go-round of mergers in the global car industry ground to a halt yesterday when DaimlerChrysler backed away from taking a stake in Nissan, the troubled Japanese group.

The German-American carmaker said that it had enough on its plate integrating the businesses of Daimler-Benz and Chrysler, merged last year.

Other observers might point to the mountain of debt that Daimler would have had to take on — at least £12.5 billion at the last count.

Nissan will continue talks with Renault, however, and few doubt that the next great upheaval in the industry is far away. The Geneva motor show, always a whirl of dealmaking rumour, has been even more charged than usual this week.

Joachim Milberg, the new chief executive of BMW, on Tuesday rebuffed suggestions that the Bavarian group, which is still controlled by one family, is ripe for takeover.

BMW has undoubtedly been weakened by the increasing losses at Rover, its British subsidiary, which have already claimed the scalp of Bernd Pischetsrieder, the last chief executive, who was perhaps a little too willing to adopt a hands-off approach in deference to British sensitivities.

However, Dr Milberg emphasised the importance of Rover to BMW's survival. The future has room only for truly global players, with a presence across a wide range of models to keep costs down. There could be room for smaller niche players, but not specialists of medium size.

Volkswagen has sold

its car arm to Ford, which had been bidding against Fiat of Italy, for about £4 billion. BMW insists it is big enough to remain independent but it needs Rover to be its mass manufacturer, and also to fill out its range into "sport utility" vehicles through the successful Land Rover and Range Rover derivatives.

Nevertheless, there are still rumours that Volkswagen wants to gobble up BMW. Given the way VW was humiliated in the Rolls-Royce Motor Cars auction — when BMW managed to undo a seemingly "done deal" and steal away the Rolls brand, it would be a sweet revenge for Ferdinand Piëch, the VW head. BMW does not start producing Rolls-Royces for a few years yet. When it does, could it be as a VW subsidiary?

However, the "big is better" mantra is not uniform across the industry. Porsche provides one of the few dissenting views. Wendelin Wiedeking, the Porsche boss, believes costs can be shared without full mergers and he points to an agreement to develop cars with VW as proof.

One of the things that militates against this is the size of egos involved in the business. The DaimlerChrysler deal was remarkable for the way Robert Eaton, the Chrysler boss, appeared willing to let Jürgen Schrempp of Daimler take the lead, although there have been some high-profile defections from the old Chrysler boardroom after the merger. The Schrempp and Piëch of this world may prove to be too big for just one company.

ADAM JONES

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## On-off switch

**M**ARJORIE SCARDINO is already thinking the unthinkable — that she might lose her much-loved colleague Greg Dyke, chairman of Pearson Television, to the less well-paid job of Director-General at the BBC.

She was asked about the possible loss of such a talent yesterday and said she would be saddened to lose Greg, but there were still a lot of good people in Pearson TV.

"That presumes that I will apply for the job and accept it if offered."



### Count the cost

I DON'T know if you knew this, but it is a disciplinary offence for

accountants to be rude. In the course of their duties, anyway. I have this from a hearing of the disciplinary committee of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which has fined Adrian Thompson for behaving "in a grossly discourteous and offensive manner" towards another accountant.

This tangled story has to do with a row between Thompson and a former colleague chasing him for some records. Thompson wrote various rude letters back — obscenities scrawled in the margin, and at one point he asked if his correspondent's middle name was "git". He was fined £3,000 with £1,800 costs.

Ring to check that being rude is unprofessional. "Accountants are deemed to be representing the profession when they are working," the ICA says. "He has let the Institute down."

**SPEAKING of advice for the elderly,** John Batterby, personal financial services partner at KPMG, has been poring over the small print in the Budget on the abolition of the married couple's allowance. He has found a loophole that will ensure the payment is still forthcoming.

All you do is wait until the allowance is phased out next April and then marry someone who was born before 5 April 1935. "Men and women of that vintage will become a much more marketable commodity," Batterby says.

### Kohl hole

HELMUT KOHL, the heavyweight former Chancellor of Germany who

was thrown out of office last autumn, has been appointed to the international advisory board of Crédit Suisse. It seems that the British practice of finding a hole for superannuated politicians is well known on the Continent, too, even if the hole in this case must have been a pretty sizeable one.

I wonder how the news, in a low-key announcement from the Swiss bank, has gone down at CSFB, Crédit Suisse's investment bank at Canary Wharf. "I don't think the earth is shaking," says one insider there. So Kohl hasn't dropped by yet.

MARTIN WALLER

# Charges at BICC see loss deepen to £94m

By PAUL ARMSTRONG

HUGE exceptional charges and tough market conditions have left BICC Group, the engineering and manufacturing company, with a £94 million pre-tax loss for 1998. This compares with a £50 million loss in 1997.

Earnings before exceptional items fell to £70 million from £110 million, mainly because of a sharp downturn in the company's cable operations.

BICC was forced to book exceptional charges of £104 million — £106 million of which related to a write-down in the carrying value of its energy cables business.

The write-down, which BICC said stemmed from new accounting standards, surprised the market and somewhat overshadowed the company's efforts to convince investors that it was recovering.

The exceptional items also included a £25 million charge associated with the loss of 500 jobs in the cables division and a £26 million write-off of historical goodwill after the sale of two businesses.

BICC's cables business saw its operating profit sliced to



£10 million from £74 million on the back of poor markets for optical fibre and telecommunications cables. BICC has since sold its interests in these businesses. Alan Jones, chief executive, said he expected the remaining cables division to make a profit this year.

Balfour Beatty, the company's civil engineering arm, reported a 30 per cent rise in operating profit to £69 million after trebling profit margins in the past two years.

Mr Jones said that Balfour's earnings would increase again this year, although he questioned whether such growth could be repeated. He said that Balfour's order book had grown to a record £2.7 billion from £2 billion a year ago.

A final dividend of 2p was declared, making 6p for the year.

Michael Blagg, an analyst with Charterhouse Securities, said that BICC had succeeded in selling its troublesome businesses and was poised for recovery.

He said that the group's ability to generate cash would improve significantly while the sharply lower debt load reduced its risk profile.

Well-heeled: About 86 per cent of shoes sold on the high street are imported, according to John Church, above, chairman of Church & Co, the footwear retailer. The company, however, managed to hold its own in 1998, reporting a £2,000 rise in

pre-tax profits to £5.8 million and a 1p rise in the total dividend to 18p per share.

However, Mr Church cautioned: "Although retail sales in January in the UK were satisfactory, there are some signs of a lack of consumer confidence."

## Third bid for Wace in four months

By FRASER NELSON

WACE GROUP, the previously unloved printing and imaging company, has received its third takeover offer in four months.

Applied Graphics Technologies (AGT), an American imaging company that competes with Wace in New York, has tabled an unsolicited £57 million cash bid.

This trumps the £55.4 million agreed offer for Wace made in January by Schawk, its US rival. It is well in excess of the £41.7 million hostile bid tabled in December by Photobition, the Anglo-American imaging company.

Fred Drasner, chairman of AGT, said he had considered making a bid for Wace after Photobition made its approach on December 21.

He said: "Trevor Grice [the former chief executive of Wace] was once thinking about selling the US operations and we were talking to him then."

When Photobition made its offer, we started looking at Wace straight away," He said AGT could raise its offer if Schawk returned with a higher price. Wace shares added 1p to 75.6p yesterday — well clear of AGT's 72p-a-share bid.

AGT stopped Schawk buying

more than 6.4 per cent of Wace by declaring its intention to bid two weeks ago. Shares of Wace have since traded above Schawk's 70p-a-share cash offer. Under takeover rules, Schawk cannot buy shares above the offer price. Wace made no comment yesterday.

## Stansted passengers reach record level

MORE than seven million passengers used Stansted airport in the year to February, a record that helped BAA, the airports operator, to report a monthly increase in passenger traffic of 7.8 per cent. Stansted traffic grew by 50.5 per cent month on month, a record, taking the total for the past 12 months to 7.1 million.

The Essex airport helped the other two London airports — Heathrow and Gatwick — to an aggregate 8.3 per cent growth in February over January, and 7.1 per cent growth for the year. In total BAA saw 7.5 million passengers go through its seven airports during the month. While Edinburgh and Glasgow both reported good growth, the smaller Aberdeen airport saw a decline of 9.2 per cent because of bad weather during the month. Southampton recorded a rise of 31 per cent.

## AMEC in sale talks

AMEC, the civil engineering group, has said it is in talks to sell its Fairclough Homes subsidiary to Center International Homes, the housebuilder based in Dallas, Texas. AMEC has said that it wants to focus on capital projects and Fairclough was put up for sale in the autumn by the company, which said then that performance in the division needed to improve. Fairclough makes about £15 million of profits. AMEC said that discussions were still at an early stage and subject to due diligence investigation by Center.

## TI's £20m acquisition

TI GROUP — the engineering group in which KKR, the US investor, recently took a 5 per cent stake — yesterday moved further into the automotive in-vehicle air-conditioning components business with the £20 million cash acquisition of Kenmore Italiana from Lai Beng Holdings. Kenmore Italiana, which supplies primarily into the European market, is to be integrated into TI's Bundy subsidiary. The company said that after £1 million of integration costs the new business would be earnings enhancing.

## Fisher sells Dutch arm

ALBERT FISHER GROUP, the food company, has sold Fisher Quality Foods' Lyttewaal to Carl Kühlne KG for £45 million guilders (£4.4 million) in cash. The proceeds of the sale, part of its planned programme of disposals, will be used to reduce debt in line with strategy. Lyttewaal, based in Ter Apel in The Netherlands, processes pickle products for sale primarily on the Dutch market. For the year to August 31, 1998, the company reported pre-tax profit of 700,000 guilders and had net assets of 29.3 million guilders before intra-group loans.

## IAWS earnings rise

EARNINGS at IAWS, the European foods and fertilisers group based in Dublin, advanced 35 per cent in the first half. The company said that it benefited from focussing on its core businesses of agribusiness and its brands, including Cuisine de France and Shamrock Foods. Reporting in euros, IAWS said that for the six months to January 31 pre-tax profits came in at £12.9 million (£2.8 million) against £9.6 million previously on sales of £385 million. The interim dividend rises from 2.13 cents to 2.49 cents. Earnings per share were 8.26 cents (6.11 cents).

## T&B gives warning

TIBETP&BRITTON, the logistics group, said that it was having to address "unacceptable" operating losses in its South African operations, which were hurt by a worsening economic and social environment, and gave warning that there were uncertainties as to its US businesses because of the retail situation. T&B reported pre-tax profit for 1998 of £28 million (£28.2 million) on turnover up 23 per cent at £1.13 billion. The final dividend is up to 14.1p per share (13p), making a total of 20p (18.5p) for the year.

## Heywood advances

HEYWOOD WILLIAMS, the building materials company, yesterday saw its share price jump 24p to 233p after it reported improved results. Pre-tax profit increased to £63 million, from £43.7 million last time. Turnover was up 9 per cent to £590 million. Earnings per share rose 6.5 per cent to 29.6p and the final dividend of 9.25p (8.8p) makes a full-year payout of 14.25p (13.8p). Heywood said that although weakness in the UK market persists, it expects falling interest rates to boost demand this year. It said US markets remain firm.

## Rage returns to black

RAGE SOFTWARE, the computer games' company, yesterday reported pre-tax profits of £610,000 for the six months to December 31, compared with a loss of £350,000 last time. Rage also said that it had reached agreements with Compaq, Dell and Acer for a cut-down version of its Expander game, to be bundled with their Pentium III machines. It said that it expects to make a profit of £3.1 million for the full year. Turnover rose to £3.1 million (£300,000) and earnings per share were 0.18p, compared with a loss of 0.14p. There is no dividend.

## Terranova Foods dips

TERRANOVA FOODS, the demerged chilled foods part of Hillsdown Holdings, marked its first results as an independent company with a fall in profit. It blamed the troubled poultry market. Operating profits for the year to December 31 fell to £25.3 million (£27.3 million), although the pre-tax profit — benefiting from one-off gains coming from the demerger — actually rose to £36.5 million from £26.3 million. The shares rose 7p to 102p yesterday, above their low of 75p but still below the 140p demerger price. The maiden final dividend is 2.8p.

# Abbot confident despite depressed oil prices

By CARL MORTISHED

ABBOT GROUP, the oil services company that last month called off merger talks with ProSafe, a Norwegian rival, predicted yesterday that the depressed oil price would create acquisition opportunities.

Alasdair Locke, chairman, said that the ProSafe talks were called off when he became aware that the Norwegian company's contracted

business was not as large as anticipated. However, he said there would be opportunities for further deals. "We can buy the production drilling business of other companies or in particular areas."

Abbot, which owns KCA Drilling, raised its final pre-tax profit by 11 per cent to £10.9 million and reported high levels of activity in its North Sea drilling operations. Mr Locke said that the difficult market would

create business for KCA as oil companies trimmed costs by outsourcing more of their platform operations. "These markets give us the opportunity to provide more services."

Abbot is also seeking to expand in the Caspian as well as in Iran, where the company is tendering for the redevelopment of Iran's oilfields.

Abbot announced a final dividend of 2p, lifting the total to 3p, an increase of 15 per cent.

# Peel shares soar as it confirms plan to delist

By MATTHEW BARBOUR

SHARES of Peel Holdings, the property group that owns the UK's biggest out-of-town shopping centre, rose 24 per cent yesterday after the board confirmed plans to take the company private.

Confidence was hit in December, after Mr Whittaker, chairman, is thought to be disappointed with the low rating put on Peel's shares by the City since it opened its £600 million Trafford

ford Centre in Manchester last September. Over the past year the group's shares have underperformed the FTSE All-share index by 30.1 per cent. Since hitting a high of 720p last June, shares fell to a low last month of 480p.

Confidence was hit in December, after Mr Whittaker, chairman, gave warning that the economic climate would undermine the Trafford Centre's performance in the short term.

In a statement, Peel said its plans were "at a very early stage and that the level of any offers that may be made has not yet been determined".

## Microsoft considers settlement

FROM ANDREW BUTCHER  
IN NEW YORK

MICROSOFT is considering a settlement in its bruising antitrust trial, but is believed to be already studying an appeal should it lose the case.

Speculation has grown on Wall Street that Microsoft is ready to settle after a tentative settlement in a legal wrangle between Federal Trade Commission officials and Intel, the world's leading computer chip maker, on Monday.

The settlement enabled Intel to avoid a publicity disaster from irked customers airing their grievances against the chipmaker in a drawn-out court case. Microsoft, by contrast, has been hammered in court and in the media over allegations of corporate bullying that have emerged in evidence at its Washington trial.

The world's biggest software company has not ruled out a settlement with the US Justice Department, but its unwavering denials of wrongdoing have led many observers to believe that it would continue to defend itself to the end.

## Pentland overhaul complete

By FRASER NELSON

PENTLAND said yesterday that the overhaul of its business is now complete, leaving a £38.8 million bill for restructuring charges.

The leisurewear company said it has now largely pulled out of the US, ended sponsorship deals with seven football clubs and pulled out of selling replica football strips.

In addition to spending £9 million on computers to make it Year 2000 compliant, Pentland was left nursing a £3.5 million loss for 1998, against a £4.6 million profit last time.

Andrew Rubin, who took over as chief executive from his father, Stephen Rubin, a year ago, said: "We've taken the necessary cost out of the business so we can build the Speedo and Ellese brands. We don't expect any more restructuring charges."

Underlying profits were £32.8 million (£38.5 million). The dividend rises 5 per cent to 3.8p with a final 2.32p. This will mean a £7.45 million payout for Mr Rubin Sr, executive chairman, who owns 56.4 per cent of the shares.

## The Corporate Bond PEP

\*Source: UICN 1998/02/09. The running yield of the PEP is based on the £17.19m of £100,000 units outstanding as at 8 February 1999. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. Both capital and income are paid quarterly and will be up and down and you may not get back the amount invested. All comparisons of cost apply to PEPs investing wholly in Unit Trusts. Tax assessments and tax legislation may apply and are subject to statutory changes. The value of tax relief will depend on your individual circumstances. Full written details are available from your personal investment adviser or from Legal & General, Registered Office: 270-272 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4M 4TP. Registered office of the Personal Investment Authority, a member of the Association of British Financial Services, 100 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JL. Legal & General is a member of the Prudential Regulation Authority and the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

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# Audit is question of public interest

**I**ncreasing interest is now being placed on International Standards on Auditing. Last autumn the World Bank criticised the quality of some audits by firms in the Far East. Around that time, the chairman of the SEC, Arthur Levitt, attacked the quality of financial reports issued by US companies and audited by US firms. In Europe, the European Commission has been increasing the attention it pays to auditing standards; last year it formed a Committee on Auditing and the subjects it has been considering have included the comparability of auditing standards within Europe and the ways in which greater consistency could be achieved. Later this year it will be considering auditor independence. In the US, an Independence Standards Board has been formed to provide greater assurance of the independence of auditors.

This increased focus on auditing standards will place great pressure on the International Auditing Practices Committee (IAPC), which forms part of the International Federation of Accountants. Hitherto, IAPC has been woefully short of resources with only a part-time chairman, no full-time director and only one or two staff. It has been agreed that it should be provided with additional resources and a review of its future strategy is under way. However, there are several important questions that still need to be considered as part of the strategy review:

- Who should own the audit standard setting body? Should it continue to be the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), a body that comprises accounting bodies from around

the world, or should it be owned by an independent organisation that would include individuals independent of the accounting profession. The International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC) is proposing a new structure under which it would be owned by an independent foundation and some would argue that such a structure would enhance the credibility of IAPC.

□ Who should sit on IAPC? Should it be, as at present, solely practitioners or should it be some combination of practitioners and non-practitioners? □ Should meetings of IAPC be open to regulators or the public? □ What should be the relationship between IAPC and the Ethics Forum of IFAC which sets auditing standards? Should IAPC take on the responsibility for setting ethical standards applicable to auditors? At present IAPC has no such responsibility but there is substantial overlap between auditing and ethical standards.

□ How should the application of Auditing Standards by practising firms be monitored? Should the monitoring be performed by IAPC or some other body? At present most Western countries have their own mechanisms for checking that auditors are applying Audit-

**Ian Plaistowe says individuals from outside the profession are essential to procedures**



Ian Plaistowe says the profession must respond to audit issues or face outside pressure

**Street life is a real drag**

FORTHCOMING strikes on the Tube will be as nothing compared with the congestion forecast for Central London on April 1. Embankment Place, outside the PricewaterhouseCoopers headquarters, is expected to be blocked completely. It is all to do with the dreaded process of harmonisation after last year's merger of Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand. PW was a no-smoking office. Coopers was not. Coopers has lost the struggle. On April 1, it becomes a no-smoking zone. Anyone seeking free financial advice should tug at the sleeves of the dozens of partners who will be standing outside with their life-enhancing garters.

**It's a takeover**

LAST YEAR'S summer dinner of the corporate finance faculty of the English ICA was notable for a speech by Lord Wollaston of Sunningdale, chairman of Great Universal Stores. He took the opportunity to tell the world just what he thought of the Takeover Panel and those who ran it. The unfortunate point was that Alistair Drefie, the panel's director-general, was sitting four along on the top table. Now, all is changed. De-

fries stood down from the panel last Friday and went back to Warburgs. He gets his chance to redress the balance on May 13. He is the guest speaker at this year's faculty dinner. Book now for the fun.

**Drawing attention**

MERGING two mid-tier accounting firms is always a hard concept to get across, and an announcement this week that the esteemed and elderly firms of Pannell Kerr Forster and Robson Rhodes are to join forces on May 1 was no exception.

Given that Grant Thornton has picked off 10 per cent of Robson Rhodes partners in recent months, there is always an underlying agenda of two firms trying to save each other from their mistakes through a merger. Announcing the merger in what used to be Disraeli's Cabinet room at the Reform Club probably didn't help.

The merger idea may have emerged over a drink at the Reform, but the club's collection of political cartoons undermined it. As the partners spelt out their vision to the press, eyes tended to wander.

One eye-catching cartoon behind the new managing partner's head was entitled *Extremes Meet in a Radical Embrace*. Definitely not what accounting mergers are about.

ROBERT BRUCE

## Tweedie facing terrier attack

THE great wrangle is under way again. The Accounting Standards Board today publishes its latest draft Statement of Principles. And as sure as accounting might follows day, Ron Paterson, that terrier of a technical partner at Ernst & Young, is ready and waiting. At the first sight of the document, his teeth will be buried into the trouser leg of Sir David Tweedie, the ASB chairman. Tweedie argues that the attacks are irrelevant. Paterson argues that the fundamentals of financial reporting are being weakened.

The story goes a long way back. Accounting standard setters have long argued that their life would be a lot easier if some kind of what used to be called a conceptual framework could be devised.

This would lay down the fundamentals, and all future standards could be drawn from that. If nothing else, it would cut down on circuitous arguments with companies eager to get around the rules.

Tweedie argues that the ASB is simply following the work that the Americans did between 1978 and 1985, which was then followed by the International Accounting Standards Committee framework of a decade ago, based firmly on the Americans' work. The standard-setting bodies in Canada and Australia have since followed suit. Tweedie argues that when the ASB was estab-

lished in 1990, its founders recommended that it should carry out work on what is generally termed a conceptual framework to help to ensure that its standards had a consistent underpinning. He argues that the new draft statement largely follows the international communities' rules.

Paterson would argue that the frameworks set up by the Americans and the rest of the world are largely honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

However, there has been a change. Paul Edling has been the project director on the new statement and worked for the old Accounting Standards Committee in the days when standard-setting was beholden to myriad voices from the six accounting bodies that then owned the process. International practice certainly did not hold sway. "Ten years ago," he will tell you, "the old ASC would take all of ten seconds to agree something which flew in the face of international practice. Now we cannot do that." The difference is the capital markets. Ten years ago, the idea of cross-border listings was for the few. Now it is for the many.

Paterson, though, is unrepentant. It was largely his dogged opposition that doomed the ASC's first

attempt at this in 1995. Now the ASB has returned with a new draft that has taken some points into account, but has largely stuck to its guns. However, this time it comes complete with another document that seeks to clarify points and answer critics and a technical supplement to give more detailed analysis of the issues.

Paterson has yet to see this package, but he has a good idea of what it contains. "The words are different, but the thoughts are just the same," he said this week. "International harmonisation is the excuse."

Where Tweedie and Paterson disagree is over how you show assets and liabilities. This is fairly fundamental. Tweedie would "follow the money" and argue that showing assets and liabilities in terms of how they are affected by transactions is the key.

Paterson is of what might be seen as the old school of prudence and matching. If, for example, a company buys a new hotel, Paterson would argue that the loss on the first year's costs should be capitalised and treated as a deferred cost rather than as an expense. Tweedie would argue that the costs are simply expenses and ought to be shown as such. Paterson's route makes companies' results smoother over a period of several years.

Provisions can be held back or fed into the system as the company judges appropriate. Tweedie's route makes for more of a switchback ride. "Keep it volatile and explain it as it is," says Tweedie. "Get rid of the cushions." There are no prizes for guessing which method is preferred by finance directors.

The problem is that any route is less than perfect. "They see matching as fuddy-duddy," says Paterson, "and they have a belief that a tight focus on assets and liabilities is the bedrock. But such a system breaks down quite quickly the more complex the transactions become."

Meanwhile, Tweedie reports that the matching system, with all its consequent baffling provisions, was the sort of abuse that the ASB was set up to outlaw. "The dog-eared accounting concepts used in the 1980s were simply not up to the task of dealing with transactions of the late 20th century and had to be replaced," he said this week.

No accounting debate can ever be cut and dried. If things were crystal clear, there would be no need for the debate. But, in the end, as Paterson puts it: "Tweedie is the man with the radio station so he controls the debate."



ROBERT  
BRUCE

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will have joined the Internet.**

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THE TIMES THURSDAY MARCH 11 1999

ARTS 37

# Gagging on a sugar-coated pill

**NEW MOVIES:** Twinkle of eye and jolly of jape, Robin Williams sets the medical world to rights in *Patch Adams*. James Christopher feels ill

The day has finally arrived when I feel obliged to issue a *Times* health warning. There is a doctor on the loose with wild delusions that he can cure everything from cancer to bunions by making you laugh.

Merrily, he is easy to spot. He has a crazed grin, wears bedpans on his feet, and has a nifty trick of turning enema bulbs into clown's noses. If you hand him a scalpel he will probably dig out your swollen appendix and twist it into a poodle balloon. He looks spookily like Robin Williams, and he terrifies hospital wards with his zany impersonations and jokeshow glasses. If you see this plump, middle-aged man, do not indulge him with your deadened fantasies. He is liable to take them entirely seriously and drown you in that swimming pool of noo-nodes you carelessly happened to mention.

His name is Patch Adams and he is shamelessly indulged by Tom Shadyac's rigid, biographical film of his life. Yes, Patch Adams is a real life doctor, and he practises his New Age pranks in the "Ge-sundheit Institute in West Virginia".

Whatever the merits of his methods, they are given scant scrutiny here. The film has only two objectives: to extract an obscene amount of sentiment under as little anaesthesia as possible, and to exploit Williams's undeniably genius for madcap clowning. It's a simple enough operation, but the results are gruesome.

The film opens in a mental institute in 1969. Williams, a lonely, unshaven leprechaun, has committed himself as a potential suicide. The doctors are heartless, and the inmates are highly-strung mutts shipped in from *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*. Angered by the impersonality of the institute and its staff, Adams checks himself out, enrolls in a pieey medical school, and starts tormenting a rack of humous scheming tutors and smug fellow students.

"What's her name?" Adams asks, not unreasonably, as a doctor prods the gangrenous foot of a patient. Herin lies Williams's revolutionary agenda. He connects with people. Once this is established, every day is Comic Relief day for Adams — and Ground Hog Day for everyone else. When he's not charming laughs out of geriatrics hanging on by their teeth, he plays the campus Bozo. He arranges a giant pair of paper mache legs in stirrups around the front door for a visiting convention of gynaecologists. What a wag.

Williams hits the jackpot with a ward full of cancer-stricken bald-headed children undergoing chemotherapy. Marc Shaiman's orchestral soundtrack, led by a quavering flute, testifies to Patch's integrity. The water pistols and glove puppets testify to his relentless

**Patch Adams**  
Empire  
12, 116 mins  
Robin Williams puts the stitches into this absurd medical movie

**Pleasantville**  
Warner Village  
West End 12, 124 mins  
Ingenious spoof of 1950s television values

**Central Station**  
Curzon Mayfair  
15, 110 mins  
Fernanda Montenegro stars in Walter Salles's Oscar-nominated Brazilian odyssey

**Schizopolis**  
Curzon Soho  
18, 96 mins  
Utter gibberish

good humour. But Adams never so much as lifts a thermometer. He is Groucho Marx impersonating Mother Teresa. But most of all he is a barrel-chested Hollywood comic with an ardent desire to change the world — specifically, to turn medical practice into an alternative themepark. His moment of epiphany — the flight of a butterfly — convinces him that his talents must not be wasted. Unforunately, that moment arrives at the end of a monstrous game of manipulation where Williams's dippy, unconvincing romance with the campus ice-maiden (Monica Potter) is crudely amputated to buy our sympathy.

The film swells towards graduation day like *An Officer and a Gentleman*. It swells towards Adams's imminent expulsion from college. But most likely it swells with its own sickly sense of self-righteousness.

In fact, Adams's fantasies would be far better served in Pleasantville, a black-and-white television Utopia where the sun always shines, where the bath-tubs have no toilets, and sex and violence do not exist. There's more than a whiff of Peter Weir's *The Truman Show* about Gary Ross's debut feature, but it's an ingenious fable in which two dysfunctional teenagers in the gloomy 1990s get sucked into a squeaky-clean 1950s soap opera. What ensues is a wonderful spoof of the reactionary and, for the most part, entirely fictitious family values which modern American politicians are prone to hark back to — namely a world hedged in by picket fences, perfect family units and positive role models. It too is a themepark, but also a sublime piece of kitsch.

The fact that *Pleasantville* is David's (Tobey Maguire) favourite show does nothing to alleviate the nightmare, or the subsequent comedy of him trying, like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, to find a way home. His trashy, busty twin sister, Jennifer (Reese Witherspoon), is utterly horrified. "We're

stuck in Nerdsburg," she screams. Expertly schooled in the Christina Ricci arts of sexual provocation, Jennifer, proceeds to ravish the school basketball hero. Sex is the serpent in this Garden of Eden, and it has a devastating effect. Old certainties come a cropper. The basketball team starts losing. "Lover's Lane" is transformed into an orgy of rocking cars. The jukebox starts playing Gene Vincent numbers. And Joan Allen, as the mother of the family into which David and Jennifer find themselves inextricably, discover the joys of masturbation. Pain and confusion follow, mostly for William H. Macy as the fabulously bewildered father of the family.

There are other sinister developments. Jeff Daniels, as the genial owner of the local diner, discovers the mystery of modern art. The blank books in the library start filling up with knowledge. And — a technically brilliant touch this — those who are infected by the

**WEB SITE:**  
Patch Adams: [www.up.com](http://www.up.com)  
**TELEVISION:**  
Pleasantville: [www.nowtv.com](http://www.nowtv.com)  
**TELEVISION:**  
Barry Sonnenfeld's *Film Night, Spy*  
Premiere Sunday 9pm, Monday 3.30pm,  
Wednesday 7.30pm

**RADIO:**  
Central Station: Radio 4, Saturday  
5.30pm

**THE HORSE WHISPERER**  
Buena Vista, PG, 1998  
HARD to believe that a metropolitan type like Kristin Scott Thomas's New York editor would consider throwing in the towel for a cow ranch in Montana. Perhaps the secret lies in Robert Redford's blue eyes. Their famous romance takes up lots of footage in this opulent version of Nicholas Evans's bestseller, while the maimed horse that Redford is curing gets forced into the background. Early scenes carry a strong emotional charge; Scarlett Johansson is most convincing as the daughter driven into an angry silence by the accident that damages her horse and leaves her crippled. But once horse, man, and girl arrive in Montana, it's thumb-twiddling time. Available to rent, and to buy on DVD.

**DANCE OF THE WIND**  
Artificial Eye, U, 1997  
A CLASSICAL Indian singer (Kimi Gidwani, a leading Indian television star) loses her voice and only recaptures it after finding herself. A predicative story, to be sure, but it is given delicately beautiful treatment by director Rajan Khosa in his first feature. In the corners of scenes, wind rustles manuscripts, and a toroise trundles along. Not a noise for people in a hurry.

**THE LAND GIRLS**  
Film Four, 12, 1997  
THREE young British women join the Women's Land Army during the Second World War, and muck in on a remote farm in Devon, where the farmer's

son provides after-hours entertainment in the barn. Not much narrative originality here, and that old devil, nostalgia, says the period recreations. But David Leland's film

cannot be faulted as an acting

entertainment in the barn. Not

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**LISTINGS**

Lorca in Salisbury

## RECOMMENDED TODAY

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Mart Hargre

## LONDON

**MICHAEL FEINSTEIN:** The New York performer of piano and voice, and one-time pupil of Gershwin, sings a selection of some of the Gershwin brothers' immortal melodies interspersed with reminiscences about the creative duo. Barbican (0171-638 8891). Tonight, 7.30pm. £6.

**HAMLET:** Rupert Wickham plays the hero in Christopher Ecclestone's production, which re-opens this theatre. Greenwich, SE10 (0870 840 1111). Opens tonight, 7.30pm. £5.

THURSDAY MARCH

celona's jewel restor

Sadly, bit of a Turkey

I

DANCE  
Graeme Cudden  
Sadler's Wells

in

THE TIMES THURSDAY MARCH 11 1999

## THEATRE

Hitler's master-builder

# Architect of world disaster

**A** part from a desk, bits of bric-a-brac, and the walls of the Almeida stage itself, Hans Hoffer's set for Speer contains just one item, the scale model of a building. But what an item! What a building! Imagine St Paul's, St Peter's and the Taj Mahal fused together and then redesigned by a committee of Roman emperors preparing for their ritual deification. Mentally expand the model to its proposed size, which is 320 metres high, with room for 180,000 inside and a crowd of a million jostling adoringly outside. There you have the huge fungoid dome.

## THEATRE

The classical colonnades and the chunky towers of the edifice Albert Speer planned for the centre of Germania — and, according to Esther Vilar's didactic but engrossing two-hander, the reason he wanted Hitler to conquer everything and everyone.

"For a world capital one needs a world," explains Klaus Maria Brandauer's Speer, and, not for the only time, the Austrian actor makes you credit an outrageous line. Indeed, both the author and her director, who is Brandauer himself, must be applauded for having hired one of the few living men capable of performing beside that horrible, fascinating model and somehow upstaging it. His Speer has moments of mottled rage, notably when he is accused of complicity in the Holocaust, but mostly this sleekly-dressed architectural Faust is cool, quiet, wry — and utterly mesmeric.

*Speer* (sponsored by AT&T) asks us to believe that the recently released Nazi came to lecture in the East Germany of 1990, and, at the end of a chat with a state apparatchik called Bauer, was asked to put his organisational skills to saving a bankrupt state from utter ruin. Even allowing for an ironic ending, this is a preposterous situation, so bare-

The shabby 'room' is the

faced an excuse for a debate, dock in which Speer stands arraigned by Sven Eric Bechtolf's wonderfully sly, watchful Bauer, with post-Nuremberg evidence added to the testimony. How could he not have known about the Holocaust when he was at a meeting where Himmler announced it? Didn't he recommend that Jews sacrifice their houses to the thousands of Aryans who would have been dis-

placed by his megalomaniac plans? Speer puts up some resistance to these questions, but none to Bauer's suggestion that his skills as armaments supremo prolonged the war by two years and cost millions of lives. His aim, he agrees, was to achieve victory and thus become what Hitler called him: "The greatest architect of the past 4,000 years."

The debate veers this way

and that, now touching on the Nazi past of prominent West Germans, now setting Speer's Thatcherite views against those of an East German regime still defending the socialism that has brought its people the Wall, the Stasi, the gunshots we intermittently hear, and economic meltdown. But it is clear that Vilar herself is the daughter of Germans exiled to Argentina, is mainly con-

cerned to deromanticise a man already half-forgiven by history.

As Brandauer so brilliantly shows us, Speer is all charm and sophisticated self-deprecation, culture and charisma. As he also suggests, he was a gifted opportunist who would have served anyone, God or Satan, to fulfil his ambition.

BENEDICT  
NIGHTINGALE

## True to the spirit of Mahler

This concert in the Philharmonia Orchestra's *Mahler and Vienna: Beginnings and Endings* series made perfect sense even without a note of Mahler being played. One beginning was supplied in Schubert, perhaps the most direct of Mahler's musical ancestors and a composer whose Ninth Symphony paved the way for the massive symphonic structures of those who followed. One ending was supplied in Berg's Violin Concerto, a work full of Viennese angst dedicated to the memory of Alma Mahler's daughter by Walter Gropius.

Under-Christoph von Dohnányi's baton the Berg was always bound to be impressive, but it was made all the more special by the solo playing of Kyung Wha Chung, giving her first London performance in well over a decade.

After a long, family-raising sabbatical, she proved that the big tone and fearless

## CONCERTS

attack so characteristic of her youthful performances are still there, but this was also a mature interpretation of profound emotional feeling.

From an opening in which Dohnányi drew sounds of silvery transluence but perhaps not hot-house intensity, the Korean violinist set off with real purpose on the work's spiritual journey. Neither she nor the conductor allowed all the dancing detail to come to the surface, but both caught the fierceness of the Scherzo and the desperate anger of the Allegro, where the soloist was able to ride the full orchestral out-

burst. The smoothly phrased woodwind quotations of the Bach chorale evoked a distant organ, underlining the valedictory mood of the piece.

The performance of Schubert's Great C major Symphony provided a stirring contrast without quite scaling the work's loftiest heights. There is probably an almost Mahlerian madness lurking somewhere in the score, but Dohnányi delivered a straightforward account that stressed its sunnier side. He established a pastoral feeling at the very beginning and got buoyant playing without ever pushing too hard. In the middle movements he conjured up further rustic images, highlighting fresh detail, but he also built the Andante towards a menacing climax. Polished playing from all sections of the Philharmonia gave the finale great punch.

JOHN ALLISON

soprano's range to high Cs and Ds, the latter (delivered impressively by Claryn McFadden) forms a reflective soliloquy which holds the dramatic momentum, generated by the reciter (Julia Watson), in perfect equipoise.

That control of the dramatic impetus, together with Birtwistle's sure sense of timing and faultless ear for timbre, add up to another score of both identifiable provenance and remarkable originality, expertly exploited by members of the Nash Ensemble under the assured direction of Lionel Friend.

The Cantata for voice and ensemble, also with McFadden as soloist, dates from three decades earlier, but in its tragically utterances and interpretation of vocal and instrumental lines it is not so removed from *The Woman and the Hare* — unlike the arrangements of motifs by Machaut and Ockeghem, also dating from 1969, with their bizarre instrumental combinations (piccolo, bass clarinet, glockenspiel among them).

From roughly halfway between the early and late pieces come the *Duets for Storab*, a work for two flutes that recalls the traditional Scottish pibroch in its six-movement structure.

Colin Matthews's scoring of Debussy's *Trois poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé* exploited the sultry timbres of solo string or wind instruments and displayed a worthy command of nuance.

BARRY  
MILLINGTON

IT IS a wasted opportunity, from an aesthetic point of view, to present a high-quality chamber ensemble like the Tokyo String Quartet in a space as large as the Bridgewater Hall. Inevitably, some of the detail and intimacy will get lost. But it would also be a waste to restrict the comparatively small audience that could be accommodated in a hall of the appropriate size.

Sadly, in that the audience numbered little more than the usual group of specialists, the hall lost out in both respects on this occasion. It was not, on the other hand, as disappointing an event as it might have been. A good ensemble can adjust to any acoustic, and it just happened that the sparsely populated hall with not too many bodies present to absorb the sound, simplified the problem. The textural and expressive variety in Haydn's Quartet in E flat needed more pointed projection to reach the distant corners.

On the other hand, the performance of Webern's Op 5

## Five powerful pieces

THE first concert in the Nash Ensemble's 20th-Century Music Series on Tuesday night focused on the works of Harrison Birtwistle: five pieces, ranging from his early association with the Pierrot Players to his latest commission, interspersed with carefully selected works of Debussy and Stravinsky (*The Soldier's Tale*).

The commission, placed strategically at the end of the programme, made a fitting climax, demonstrating as it did that Birtwistle is still at the height of his considerable powers. For *The Woman and the Hare*, Birtwistle requested a text from David Harsent, librettist of his opera *Gawain*. Harsent's text, archetypically elusive, proved to be too long, leading Birtwistle to apportion sections of it to a reciter, setting the rest for soprano.

The effect is not unlike reductive and aria sounding simultaneously, the more so since the vocal line moves slowly, syllable by syllable. With its melismas soaring right through the



## Essex lords of the dancefloor

Since emerging from Es

sex almost eight years ago, Underworld have been one of Britain's most highly rated dance bands. Inspired by the Acid House scene of the late 1980s, the trio were among the first wave of electronic acts to turn faceless techno into palatable pop. That Underworld have so far failed to match the commercial success of their peers, the Prodigy, does not appear to have damaged the group's appeal. This was the first of three sold-out London shows on a ten-date UK tour to promote the release last week of their third album, *Beaucoup Fish*, which entered the charts at No 3, and Underworld's every move provoked a rapturous, emotional response.

Compared to contemporaries of a similar standing such as Orbital or Leftfield, Underworld have stuck staunchly to their club origins. As if to prove the point, the atmosphere inside the Astoria resembled a rave. Rather than a support act, band member Darren Emerson played a DJ set. The gig itself did not begin until after 11pm, by which time the stifling heat had convinced much of the crowd to strip off as many layers of clothes as was decent.

Underworld eventually appeared on stage to a riot of coloured lights and a backdrop of five huge video screens, which mixed striking graphics with footage being filmed live, so the band and its banks of electronic equipment appeared to be housed in a kind of multimedia cave. To one side, thirty-something singer Karl Hyde — a skinny blond in jeans and a baggy jumper — danced frantically while musicians Rick Smith and Emerson busied themselves at keyboards, samplers and techno decks.

The set, which lasted for almost two hours, consisted of around a dozen string-out songs culled from all three of

## POP



Underworld's albums. That the new material slipped seamlessly into classic tracks such as *Congress*, *Rez* and *Rowlo* proved how little the band's basic sound has altered over the years. At once intelligent, atmospheric and dancefloor-friendly, it is essentially techno-trance sculpted from complex, hard-edged rhythms and pulsating digital grooves.

Although clearly of the high-

est technical order, Underworld's music relies heavily on disjointed fragments of verse, written and sung solely by Hyde, to distinguish it from the sea of electronica now produced all over the world. Consequently, when the singer's random contributions gelled with Smith and Emerson's intense endeavour, the result was electrifying. At other times it was merely mediocre.

Midway through the performance, Underworld played what should have been their trump card, *Born Slippy*. The band's only big hit to date (since their inclusion on the *Trainspotting* soundtrack), the song has become a modern-day dance anthem. But while the audience went wild, the trio had to try hard to feign enthusiasm. *Born Slippy*'s days may well be numbered.

LISA VERRICO

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AIR FRANCE TOKEN 5

CHANGING TIMES

# BOOKS

## She divorced him, in the end

**T**hough it was certainly not new, the case for the not-so-divine marquis, Donatien Alphonse François Marquis de Sade, has been advanced with an ever increasing intensity over the course of our century. Guillaume Apollinaire chased his unpublished writings and celebrated him as "the free spirit that ever lived". The new sexologists saw him as a fountainhead of their forbidden knowledge; half, with Masoch, of a great modern romance. For 1920s communists he became a key libertarian, a true *philosophe*, one of the great Jacobins. French surrealists like Breton hailed him as "the divine marquis", a hero of the imagination, "a surrealist in sadism." For literary libertarians, he was the great example of the writer who cannot be denied.

In recent times the homage has grown ever greater. Foucault and Lacan celebrated his radical transgression, Barthes the coprophilic pleasure of his text. Angela Carter found a feminist handle to examine his surreal misogyny and his vision of female irrational passions. With his commanding lesson that "sex is violence", Camille Paglia has him as the most necessary of the unread Western writers. The writer said to have inflamed Robespierre to blood-lust and Swinburne to fits of uncontrollable laughter has been pantheised with the inclusion of his works in the Bibliothèque de la Pleiade. Now there are Sadian holiday-trips ("the romance of the illusory") to the ruins of his grim castle of La Coste in the Vaucluse.

And yet . . . As Laurence Bongie reminds us in his refreshingly unadmirable study, Sade was almost none of the things his supporters from the

**Malcolm Bradbury glimpses the home life of the Undivine Marquis**

**SADE**  
A Biographical Essay  
By Laurence L. Bongie  
University of Chicago Press,  
£23.25  
ISBN 0 226 06420 4

**AT HOME WITH THE MARQUIS DE SADE**  
By Francine du Plessix Gray  
Chatto & Windus, £20  
ISBN 1 85619 607 0

Romantics onward said he was: not a natural man, a true libertarian, a true *philosophe*, a radical atheist, an honest Jacobin, or a man imprisoned simply for his beliefs. The great acceptance of his pornographic works that time, literature and modern theory (the text not the author) allows should not, we say, blind us to the facts of his life. For one thing Sade certainly was: he was a sadist — that is, a source of pain, a dangerous user and abuser of others (that, not his ideas, put him in the Bastille). An irrationalist in the Age of Reason, a narcissist in the Age of Revolution, an aristocrat in the eternal arrogance of his desires and in his corrupt exploitation of every situation, he belongs to the most distorted aspects of the age that led from the Utopia of the Enlightenment to the psychotics of Romanticism.

Now, for various reasons, we seem to be revising "our" Sade. The battle for literary freedom is over. The notion that a text is a floating signifier and nothing else won't do.

Feminism has more still: a vivid new biography (following on from Maurice Lever's recent account). Her title has a comic aspect. Like *Holidays with Dracula*, a spell at home with de Sade is one thing you wouldn't crave. But then the women around him were: so, like other recent crones, Gray seeks to understand Sade's life through the "extraordinary" women in it. Like Bongie she notes the significance of the half-absent mother; but in the 18th century, an age of complex domestic politics, most women were. She explores the formidable mother-in-law, Madame de Montreuil, who first protected Sade and then had him imprisoned (the Revolution helped him take his revenge). And she considers the wife who, despite the abuses he offered, stood — until in the new order divorce became possible — by her man.

Things to do than trawl those wearying Sadean fantasies. And, as the historical and biographical evidence gets better, we can now see far more of his upbringing, his relation to *ancien régime* culture, his character — and his women. The background figures have grown much sharper. There is Sade's father, another aristocratic, highly ambitious, finally disappointed court libertine, who married to use his well-born wife as a route of access to a princess he desired even more. There is Sade's disappointed mother, who retreats to a convent, avoiding the rages of her already tempestuous son. There is his wife, Renée-Pelagie, wealthy, pious, bourgeois, not especially attractive — whom he married under similar exploitative circumstances. She became a co-conspirator in his orgies, her task to visit her husband in prison to provide the luxuries he craved: the works of Montaigne, an anal dildo.

Since the Sadean passions involved much violence toward the mother-figure, this is seen of central significance in both the books under review. Bongie's is the more scholarly, an analysis of the new materials and of the psycho-pathological sources of Sade's orgiastic, infantile, tempestuous, transgressive character. It sees his mind as hyper-intelligent and essentially hypocritical, his political observations as bogus, his tactics as crass and cunning, the consequences of his public and sexual activities as full of surprise.

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## BOOKS

## What a girl learns at Beverly Hills High

Andrew Morton's version of *Monica's Story* is a tale of divorce, demands and depression — sound familiar?

I wonder if Daniel arap Moi has problems with low self-esteem? If he does, it would provide a unifying theme for Andrew Morton's *Monica's Story*, which has otherwise focused on young women who suffer, in one form or another, from this peculiarly modern problem. He is the writer who has made it as easy for his readers to imagine the late Diana, Princess of Wales, standing in her socks in front of a refrigerator devouring pints of consolatory ice-cream as they might — perhaps more easily — picture his latest subject doing the same.

I write "peculiarly modern" advisedly; while I am quite certain that human beings through the ages have felt bad about themselves (who knows, perhaps even Scheherazade, anxious about the quality of her tales, felt moved to scoff secret scoops of sherbet), *Monica's Story* highlights the combination of LSE and a sense of entitlement which appears to characterise

the Nineties version of angst. Monica Lewinsky tells Andrew Morton about her first affair with a married man, a schmo called Andy Bleier who was a drama technician at her high school — Beverly Hills High, of course. What drove her into his arms? "Looking back it was just a lack of self-worth, of thinking that I did not deserve anything better. Deep inside I didn't think I was good enough to have a full relationship. It was a very painful and raw time for me," she tells Morton.

Privileged childhood, parentsrimoniously divorced, a relationship with a man who is — for reasons social or emotional — somehow unavailable. Disaster. This seems to be a story we are happy to hear over and over — it's the reason we can never get enough of Monica, no matter how much we claim we've had it up to here with her. But then who are the thousands of people who bought the paperback

of the Starr report (when it was already available free on the Net)? Who enabled Monica — now ensconced in the ranks of single-name celebrities — to scrawl her signature eight times a minute at Harrods on Monday? All those people who find her story the flip side of the fairytales where the princess gets her handsome prince. "There's part of me that really wants to go and see her," said an elegant friend of mine whom I would never have pegged for a Monica maven. As she spoke her eyes widened with horror at herself. "It's like wanting to go and see a freak show."

Poor Monica: a freak show. Yet reading Andrew Morton's book makes it impossible to think poor Monica Monica — for all her "lack of self-worth" — never thinks it. Speaking to Jan Moir in New York she told the journalist that only now, on her own book tour, did she understand why the President had not paid her the attention she felt



**Erica Wagner**

she deserved. "I don't even have meetings on top of my schedule," she said. "And he had to do this every day, all the time."

That's the sense of entitlement that makes *Monica's Story*, problematic and emblematic. This tale has always been about the imposition of the ridiculous upon the sublime (all

right, more often it's been about the imposition of the ridiculous on the ridiculous) and the juxtapositions in Morton's book are bizarre. Of course we've had them in the Starr report — that blow-job while he was on the phone — but we haven't had them in Andrew Morton's ferociously straight-faced, unctuously sympathetic prose. The date is January 21, 1996: "Handsome" is struggling with international affairs, "Kiddo" with the perils of having a bad hair day in the Oval Office. "Smiling gently, he put his arm around her... He was in pain not only physically — he suffers from chronic back problems — but emotionally: that day, he had received news of the first killing of an American serviceman in Bosnia. So while he and Monica once more indulged in their form of making out, it was an emotional occasion for both of them, particularly for the President, who, as Commander-in-Chief of all US forces, was feeling his heavy responsibilities especially keenly."

OK, perhaps he was. What Monica was feeling was that because (and this is reiterated throughout the book) she saw him "as a man

and not just as the President" he should have picked up the phone and called her a little more. He should have given her a job in the White House, stopped "the meanies" from banishing her to the Pentagon. Early on in the book Morton refers perceptively to Monica's tendency to "see life as an unfolding movie script": in the movie the girl would get the guy. I saw *The American President*, too, and while I may not have a thing for Michael Douglas, it did come out feeling that a night of passion in the Executive Mansion wouldn't be such bad news... at least I felt that until the lights came up.

But for Monica — for all the Monicas — the lights are always dimmed and the opening music is always fading, the real show is always just about to start. In the beginning was the American Dream, and the American Dream said you can have anything your heart desires. It's yours by right.

Guess what? You can't. It isn't.

**MONICA'S STORY**  
By Andrew Morton  
Michael O'Mara, £16.99  
ISBN 1 85479 426 4



## Salvaged from the depths

AN OPERATIONAL NECESSITY

By Gwyn Griffith

Harrill, £10.99

ISBN 1 86046 596 X

IT IS 1945. A German U-boat captain orders the floating survivors of a freighter he has torpedoed to be machine-gunned because he believes that the safety of his own boat depends on destroying all traces of the attack. Shifting effortlessly from the broken bodies floating in the wreckage to the action aboard the submarine, Gwyn Griffith provides perceptive insight into the paradoxes of war. The courtroom scene at the end — worthy of John Grisham — deserves a special mention. First published in 1968, this new edition from Harrill rekindles the work of an author who will be remembered as both accomplished storyteller and Second World War veteran.

## Chops for tea

THE INVESTIGATION

By Juan Jose Saer

Serpent's Tail, £9.99

ISBN 1 85242 297 1

A MURDERER courts elderly Parisian ladies, inviting himself over for dinner to ply them with liquor and cheap affection. After the conversational aperitif he chops them into pieces and carefully arranges said parts in formations on a platter. While Chief Inspector Morvan, the officer in charge of the police investigation, tries to find a crack in the "recherché perfectionism" of the monster's crimes, an unnamed author is discovered in Argentina. *The Investigation* seeks to unravel both cases. José Saer, a leading Argentine writer of the post-Borges generation now living in Paris, is detailed without being gruesome.

## Buried gems

CHEATIN' HEART

Women's Secret Stories

Edited by Kim Longinotto

Serpent's Tail, £8.99

ISBN 1 85242 555 5

IT SOUNDS like the title of a My Guy photo story, but there is not a speech bubble in sight in *Cheatin' Heart* — just excellent writing by women. The editors have uncovered secret stories by accomplished writers such as Janet Turner Hospital, Amy Bloom and Rose Tremain. *Dinner For One*, the tale of elderly couple, Lai and Henry, who have been married for 50 years, and a gay restaurateur, Larry, who is dumped by the love of his life, is especially touching. Using simple language, Tremain is there at the sinking of one flighty and one lifelong relationship, getting a heart-rending snap as they go under together.

ALEX O'CONNELL



Learning curve: Natalie Angier's improbable explanation of why we are attracted to rounded forms compares prominent cheekbones to buttocks

## A good cigar is a smoke

Women deserve better than this, says Marianne Wiggins

Natalie Angier writes a column for *The New York Times*, where her sassy takes on what the United States calls "popular science" have won her America's leading journalism award, the Pulitzer Prize.

Endowed more than 50 years ago by the publishing tycoon Joseph Pulitzer, the prize which bears his name has come to be synonymous not only with excellence in all categories of writing but with courage and clarity of thought. Sadly, like too many formerly idealised institutions in America's culture, the Pulitzer, too, has apparently been debased, if the quality of thought and writing on display in *Woman* can serve as a yardstick.

Perhaps it was inevitable that the culture that invented Pop Art would spawn pop everything — pop science, pop politics, pop Pulitzer. When Andy Warhol predicted everybody could be famous for 15 minutes, he failed to foresee the future's spin on that pattern of fast fame. As the so-



called celebrity of any woman whose life and limb the current President has touched will illustrate, "celebrity" ain't worth much in America these days. Anybody can be famous for 15 minutes. That's what Monica Lewinsky and television shows hosted by Ricki Lake and Jerry Springer go to prove. What counts isn't fame or the achievement of a Pulitzer. What counts is cashing in on it.

Without the gloss of the Pulitzer, Miss Angier's lacklustre writing would command as much authority as the latest sad case on today's TV confessional. One has to believe that the only reason this hash of a book has come into print is because of Miss Angier's credentials. Let's hope that she cashes in with this book and never has to write another one. This one reads as if Miss Angier dictated it all in one go while, say,

doing her pelvic floor exercises. In a chapter about the physiology of the vagina, she confides: "But, gals, there's no denying it: sometimes we stink; and we know it. Not like strawberry yogurt or a good Cabernet but like, alas, abacore. Or even skunk. How does this happen? If you haven't binned for a week, I'll let you figure it out for yourself."

Such is the level of Miss Angier's scientific instruction.

Chapter by ill-conceived chapter, we gals are anatomised led down the aisles of our own bodies as through a dark cinema with Miss Angier serving as usherette, focusing her fuzzy light on feminism, feminism's most recent mutation — the idea that the case for woman's superiority over man is proven by the natural superiority of her anatomical design and engineering. Ovaries, ovaries, menstruation, female aggression, orgasm and breasts each get a chapter in Angier's misnamed "geography". There's more science and cartography in a cheese wrapper than in Angier's lame-brained version of the female form.

But it's on the subject of the female breast that Angier proves that there's never any low that's low enough in the endless process of a culture's dumbing-down. "Still, mysteriously, we have curves and we

are drawn to curves," she writes, "and to those who wave them in our faces. We are drawn to rounded breasts and rounded muscles. We are drawn to prominent cheekbones, those facial breasts, or maybe facial buttocks, or mince pies or apples, or faces within faces?"

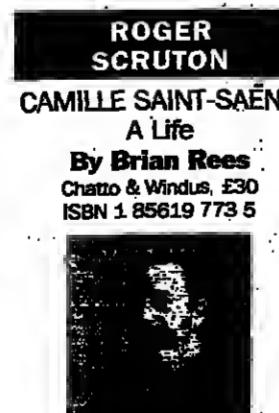
Good grief! I trust her facial buttocks are burning with embarrassment. What a load of duodenal face cream.

## Only Germans could prove a match for him

Camille Saint-Saëns died in 1921, at the ripe old age of 86, crowned with all the honours that governments, academies and musicians had the power to bestow. It seemed inconceivable that the man who wrote *Sampson et Dalilah*, the Second Piano Concerto and the 3rd Symphony (the Organ Symphony) should ever be denoted from the musical Pantheon or that his influence, as a teacher, a critic, and an exponent of the tonal language, should one day be deplored.

It was Saint-Saëns's misfortune, however, to live too long, so as to overlap with the Modernists. Moreover, he retained his creativity, his sharp intelligence and his polemical gift to the end. Not only did he represent the tradition, against which Debussy and Stravinsky were in open rebellion; he also spoke for it. He was the Grand Old Man whom every rebel hopes for, the articulate spokesman for things which will soon be dead, and himself along with them.

By the time I encountered his name, in the late 1950s, Saint-Saëns was known for little besides the *Carnival of the Animals* and the *Danse Macabre*, pieces that would appear frequently on *Desert Island Discs* to merit serious at-



tention. Opera buffs loved *Mon cœur ouvre à ta voix* from *Sampson et Dalilah*, but the sneers were quick to point out that its most compelling phrase was lifted from a song by Schubert. As for the concertos and the Organ Symphony, my contemporaries dismissed them as late-Romantic curiosities, remarkable only for their emotional expertise.

Since then, the censorious

reign of French history, but his life was as uneventful as Modernists find his music. Nor does Brian Rees, despite immense labours of research, impart very much lustre to it. A child prodigy, who was play-

ing and composing in his fifth year, Saint-Saëns entered the world of music through an open door. He had every gift a musician could hope for: sight-reading, symphonic scores with the rapidity of Liza and improvising with the competence of Mozart.

Brought up by his widowed mother, he sought in music for a fatherly authority that had been denied him in life. He escaped unharmed from all the major conflicts of 19th-century France, married in middle age, and mixed with the established authors, painters and composers of his day, recognised by all as the possessor of a talent so phenomenal that only Germans could prove a match for him. The one tragedy in his life — the death of his two sons in infancy — was so enormous that he could never refer to it or encompass it in music, and the suggestion that would make him most interesting to a purist modern reader — that he was an active homosexual — remains an unsubstantiated rumour. With

one by one, however, his masterpieces are being recuperated — the Organ Symphony, the concertos for piano, cello and violin and the chamber music. As for the operas, apart from *Sampson et Dalilah*, they have yet to be seriously reviewed, and the descriptions given by Brian Rees (who devoted much of his painstaking biography to an account of the music) suggest that they might well be left to gather dust in the archive.

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Paradoxically, Berlin is the most real thing in the novel. Its death is described in images of freakish intensity, while human beings are as insubstantial as ghosts. We never discover the narrator's name, and even Layla is a shadowy presence. When the narrator's search for Layla fails, he turns to fundamentalism and — rather unconvincingly — joins the terrorist group, Hezbollah: his detachment makes such a commitment seem unlikely. He returns to England to trace a blasphemous writer, clearly based on Salman Rushdie.

Hanania has written a timely book. His treatment of the farwa on Rushdie has already sparked a debate in al-Farwaniya, and his portrayal of Hezbollah coincides with recent media images of Galileans sleeping in bomb shelters after being threatened with shelling by Lebanese guerrillas. Occasionally Hanania addresses the breakdown of Beirut with a wider perspective. Before the war the narrator's friend Harun earns money by telling tourists about "the marvel that was Sidon". Once a great Levantine seaport, Sidon was invaded by Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Turks. Little remains. Like Athens and Alexandria in *The Waste Land*, Sidon succumbed to historical cycles of growth and decay. Its fate is echoed by Beirut, and in his minute descriptions of its changes, Hanania proves himself the prose poet of disintegration, of the tearing apart of a society's fabric.

Tony Hanania's second novel takes its title from a phrase at the dark centre of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. The poet's apocalyptic vision fits Hanania's portrait of his native Beirut: "Cracks and reforms burst in the violet air / Falling towers / Jerusa... Athens Alexandria / Vienna London / Unreal." Both writers chart the collapse of a civilisation and the search for meaning in the aftermath.

*Unreal City* is ambitious, spanning the period from the 1970s, before the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war, to the early 1990s, after the defeat of the Christian militias. The young narrator moves between England, where he is educated, and Lebanon, his homeland. His search for an ex-wife — a Palestinian refugee, Layla — takes him back to Beirut. On each return the city draws closer to anarchy.

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## Grazing rights can be sold separately

**Bettison and Another v Langton and Others**  
Before Lord Justice Simon Brown, Lord Justice Ward and Lord Justice Robert Walker  
Judgment February 19

Grazing rights attached to a property could, if quantified in terms of a specific number of animals, be sold separately without the property so as to become a freestanding right.

The Court of Appeal so stated, *inter alia*, when dismissing an appeal by the second and third defendants, Wilfred and Heather Penters, from an order of Judge Anthony Thompson, QC, at Bodmin County Court on January 22, 1998 whereby he made a declaration as to title sought by the first and second plaintiffs, Stephen and Caroline Bettison, and dismissed the counterclaim, for a different declaration as to title, made by the second and third defendants.

Mr Vivian Chapman, who did not appear before, for the second and third defendants; Mr Leslie Blom, who did not appear below, for the plaintiffs; Mrs Jacqueline Langton, first defendant, in person.

**LORD JUSTICE ROBERT WALKER** said that the appeal raised questions of some complexity, and of some general interest to the rural community, as to ancient rights of common and the effect on them of twentieth century legislation, especially the Commons Registration Act 1965. Towns Down was in the parish of Cardinham in Cornwall, a few miles north-east of Bodmin and on the edge of Bodmin Moor. In its lee there were several farms including Sina Farm. In 1968 Sina Farm consisted of a farmhouse, outbuildings and about 38 acres of small fields.

Mrs Langton who owned Sina Farm made two sales, the first, in 1987, to Mr and Mrs Benson and the second, in 1994, to Mr and Mrs Penters.

The Bettisons said that the first sale, of grazing rights, was effective, even though there was no simultaneous sale of any part of Sina Farm itself, and that thereafter Mrs Langton had no grazing rights left to sell to anyone else.

The Penters said that the purported sale of grazing rights on their own was a nullity, that the grazing rights remained with Mrs Langton, and that part of the rights passed to them in 1994 when they bought the farmhouse and about 25 acres of the fields of Sina Farm from Mrs Langton's mortgagee.

The Bettisons had applied immediately to the Cornwall County Council, the registration authority under the 1965 Act, for an amendment of the rights section of the register. But their application seemed to have been shelved and it had not been dealt with when the Penters also made an application for registration.

The county council had since 1996 taken the attitude that the matter must be resolved by the court, if the rival applicants could not resolve it by agreement.

The first main issue was whether a profit of grazing or pasture upon land which was not specifically capable of being grazed away from that property so as to become a profit in gross, that is, freestanding. That had been discussed in textbooks for over 300 years.

With one modern exception, and with varying degrees of confidence and explanation, the textbooks expressed a view unfavourable to Mr and Mrs Penters. It was common ground that there was no single relatively reported case in which the resolution of the issue had actually been necessary to the decision.

The issue was one which, although involving some very old law, was far from archaic terminology, was well known generally, especially to those engaged in animal husbandry in upland areas of England and Wales where rights of common were still important to the rural economy.

Mr Chapman submitted that an incorporated right which was by its name and nature appurtenant to a piece of corporeal land must necessarily remain inseverably annexed to it. Severance by grant of the right to someone who was not also the grantee of the corporeal land would be, he said, a contradiction in terms.

Mr Blom submitted that a profit appurtenant for a certain and limited number was capable of severance by grant, and thereupon thereby became a profit in gross.

There was, he said, no contradiction in terms or in principle: the right was appurtenant until it was severed, and on severance it became a right in gross, that is, a free-standing right.

The judge held that where appurtenant rights of grazing were limited to a specific number, they were alienable, because there was now any possible prejudice to the owner of the common.

He then went on to hold, and that was the main issue in the appeal, that the effect of the 1965 Act was to bring an end to legacy and covenancy (the principle which meant that the number of animals which one could turn out to graze was limited by the capacity of the arable land to support them during winter), and to replace it by a system requiring the registration of rights for fixed numbers of animals.

Mr Chapman had argued that the judge was wrong on both issues. On the first issue he submitted that the judge's decision was contrary to principle and in particular fallacious in supposing there could be no prejudice to the owner of the common if the rights were numerically quantified.

(ii) not compelled by binding authority, and (iii) not in accordance with section 18(1) of the Law of Property Act 1925.

As to the second point, Mr Chapman argued that a profit in gross, unlike an easement in gross,

was a well recognised type of incorporeal hereditament, not an anomalous exception.

There was no obvious reason in principle why a profit appurtenant should not become a profit in gross, if its scope was quantified otherwise than by reference to the needs of the property to which it was annexed.

His Lordship could readily accept that if rights of common for a fixed number of animals were freely alienable, that would in practice make it less likely that they would fall into disuse: market forces would tend to bring the rights into the ownership of those who would make best use of them.

But that was one of the reasons underlying the law's general policy of favouring alienability over inalienability, where it could.

The lord of the manor or his successor might have less prospect of seeing the exercise of rights of common dwindling, but that did not amount to prejudice to his legal rights.

Mr Chapman also put forward a policy argument based on the need for commoners to cooperate in a spirit of give and take that spirit might, he suggested, be lost as a result of the intrusion of strangers.

But if rights of common were alienable the most likely purchasers would be other commoners with growing herds or flocks, as the Bettisons appeared to be, although there was no finding about that.

His Lordship did not think that those rather speculative considerations could be given any weight.

As to the second point, Mr Blom conceded that there was no reported case, ancient or modern, which clearly decided the issue in such a way as to constitute a binding precedent.

Nevertheless, the preponderance of authority both in reported cases and in classic textbooks appeared to his Lordship to support

the view that an appurtenant profit of grazing, if limited to a fixed number of animals, could be granted separately so as to become a profit in gross.

In his Lordship's judgment, the cumulative effect of that authority, even if it was not strictly binding, was so powerful that it should be followed, especially where the general policy of the law, in case of doubt, was to favour property being freely transferable.

Section 87 of the 1925 Act provided: "(i) Where an easement, right or privilege for a legal estate is created, it shall ensue for the benefit of the land to which it is intended to be annexed." That provision was new and was in Part XI of the Act, headed "Miscellaneous".

No guidance as to its legislative purpose could be derived from its surroundings or from the notes in *Wolsey and Cherry's Conveyancing Statutes* (13th edition 1972) volume 1, p32.

In the period of nearly three-quarters of a century in which it had been force it had never, it seemed, been commented on or explained in any reported case.

His Lordship found it a very obscure provision.

It must have been intended to clarify some supposed doubt or to fill in a supposed gap in the law, but the precise nature of the doubt was not a matter of relevance.

But whatever the true explanation, his Lordship found it inconceivable that Parliament intended by those obscure words, directed as they were primarily to easements rather than profits, to change the law as to the severance of profits, especially as rights of common were expressly referred to, although in connection with public access to commons, in two other sections in Part XI, sections 193 and 194.

Lord Justice Simon Brown and Lord Justice Ward agreed.

Solicitors: Edward Harris & Son, Swansdown; Daniell & Battell, Camborne.

## Suing on will without rectification

**Horsfall and Another v Haywards (a Firm)**

Before Lord Justice Hirst, Lord Justice Mummery and Lord Justice Buxton  
Judgment February 18

Intended beneficiaries under a negligently drafted will were not obliged to issue rectification proceedings to mitigate the loss suffered by the testator for negligence, if in fact there was no prospect of the rectification proceedings resulting in any material recovery of the funds lost.

The Court of Appeal so held in

when dismissing an appeal by the defendant solicitors, Haywards, of Stowmarket, Suffolk, from the decision of Mr Justice Evans-Lombe, sitting in the High Court at Norwich on November 27, 1997, who ordered them to pay £67,503.17 in damages for professional negligence to the plaintiffs, Miss Jennifer Horsfall and Mrs Violet Ruth Horsfall.

The main ground of the solicitors' appeal was that the plaintiffs were precluded from claiming against them by their failure to mitigate their loss, in particular by failing to bring a claim to vary the provisions of the trust by rectification under section 20 of the Administration of Justice Act 1982.

Section 20 provided:

"(i) If a court is satisfied that a will is so expressed that it fails to carry out the testator's intentions, in consequence (a) of a clerical error or (b) of a failure to understand his instructions, it may order that the will shall be rectified so as to carry out his intentions."

"(ii) An application for an order under this section shall not, except with the permission of the court, be made after the end of the period of six months from the date on which representation with respect to the estate of the deceased is first taken out."

There was no reason why the plaintiff could not have brought rectification proceedings in time before he instituted the negligence action. If he had succeeded in rectifying the will, there would be no need for him to sue the solicitor, save to recover the costs of the rectification.

In the present case, there was no evidence before the judge that Mr Landin had misunderstood the testator's instructions within section 20(1)(b) or that the will contained a clerical error within section 20(1)(a) of the 1982 Act.

Even if, which the judge doubted, the rectification proceedings had been likely to succeed, they would not have resulted in any material recovery of the funds to compensate the plaintiffs for the loss of their interest under the will.

The question was whether the plaintiffs failed to take reasonable steps to mitigate their loss. Under section 20(2), rectification proceedings had to be brought within six months of the grant of probate.

Both before and after that date, the position was that the first plaintiff was misunderstand the will with Mrs Maud Horsfall, as well as having power of attorney for her.

Both plaintiffs, as well as Mrs Horsfall, relied on Mr Landin, who acted as solicitor in the administration of the estate, to deal with matters affecting the estate appropriately.

There was no evidence that he gave any advice about the possibility of rectifying the will or about the unreasonableness of sending the proceeds of sale transmitted to Mrs Horsfall in Canada.

The first plaintiff did not play an active part in the administration of the estate and did not understand what rights were conferred upon her under the will.

It was only later that she became concerned that her interests under the will might not materialise. Initially, both plaintiffs had been mainly concerned not to upset Mrs Horsfall, and to help her establish herself in Canada.

It was common ground before the judge that the solicitors owed a duty of care to the plaintiffs as well as to the testator to draft the will in accordance with the testator's intentions, and that in misdrafting the

will the solicitors had acted in breach of that duty.

The court was solely concerned with the assessment of damages, which the judge based on the net value of the house, subject to a continuing life interest in favour of the widow, without reduction.

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"(xx) An application for an order under this section shall not, except with the permission of the court, be made after the end of the period of six months from the date on which representation with respect to the estate of the deceased is first taken out."

"(xxi) An application for an order under this section shall not, except with the permission of the court, be made after the end of the period of six months from the date on which representation with respect to the estate of the deceased is first taken out."

"(xxii) An application for an order under this section shall not, except with the permission of the court, be made after the end of the period of six months from the date on which representation with respect to the estate of the deceased is first taken out."

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## Privy Council

Law Report March 11 1999

Court of Appeal

**Duty to give brief reasons for decision****Stefan v General Medical Council**

Before Lord Browne-Wilkinson, Lord Steyn, Lord Clyde, Lord Hutton and Lord Hobhouse of Woodborough  
Judgment March 8

The health committee of the General Medical Council was obliged to give at least some brief statement of the reasons which formed the basis for its decision.

The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council had held in allowing an appeal by Dr Maria Stefan from a decision of the health committee under section 37 of the Medical Act 1983 suspending her indefinitely because of a medical condition and in remitting the case to be reheard by a differently constituted committee.

Mr Robert Engelhart, QC, and Mr Mark Shaw for the GMC; Dr Stefan in person; Mr Philip Harvey, QC, as amicus curiae.

**LORD CLYDE** said that there were distinctions between the professional conduct committee and the health committee.

One of those was that the appeal permitted under section 40 of the 1983 Act against a decision of the professional conduct committee was at large, while an appeal against a decision of the health committee was, by virtue of section 40(5) limited to a point of law.

In the present case their Lordships were concerned solely with the existence of an obligation on the health committee to give reasons for its decisions and not with the position regarding the giving of reasons by the professional conduct committee. They expressly re-

frained from expressing any view on that matter.

There was no express statutory duty on the health committee to state reasons for its decisions. The procedure which it was required to follow was prescribed in the General Medical Council Health Committee (Procedure) Rules Order 1987-1997 (SI 1987 No 2174, as amended by SI 1996 No 1219 and SI 1997 No 1529).

But neither in the Act nor in the rules was any such express obligation to be found; nor could their Lordships find an implied obligation to state reasons.

But correspondingly, their Lordships were not persuaded that the Act or the rules were to be read as creating an obligation to give reasons where the common law would require reasons to be given.

The trend of the law had been towards an increased recognition of the duty upon decision-makers of many kinds to give reasons. That trend was consistent with current developments towards an increased openness in matters of government and administration.

But the trend was proceeding on a case-by-case basis and had not lost sight of the established position of the common law that there was no general duty of disclosure on all decision-makers.

There was certainly a strong argument for the view that what were once seen as exceptions to a rule may now be becoming examples of the norm, and the cases where reasons were not required might be taking on the appearance of exceptions.

But the general rule had not been departed from and their Lordships did not consider that the

present case provided an appropriate opportunity to explore the possibility of such a departure. They were conscious of the possible re-appraisal of the whole position which the passing of the Human Rights Act 1998 might bring about.

The provisions of article 6(1) of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1953, Cmd 9969) which were now about to become directly accessible in national courts, would require closer attention to be paid to the duty to give reasons.

A few years in the future there would be a permanent obligation on the part of the practitioner to the particular practitioner, the general consideration would remain that the committee was adjudicating upon the right of a person to work as a registered practitioner.

There was nothing in the Act

or the rules requiring reasons not to be given and no grounds of policy or public interest justifying such restraint. In the light of the character of the committee and the framework in which it operated, it seemed to them that Lordships that there was no obligation on the committee to give at least a short statement of its reasons.

The extent and substance of the reasons had to depend upon the circumstances. They need not be elaborate nor lengthy. But they should be such as to tell the parties in broad terms why the decision was reached. In many cases a very few sentences should suffice to give such explanation as was appropriate to the particular situation.

Their Lordships did not anticipate that the recording of a generally agreed statement of their reasoning would add to the burden of the decision-making process. While the decision involved the application of some medical expertise in the assessment of fitness, the articulation of the reasons for a value judgment should not give rise to difficulty.

Their Lordships observed that in certain other appeals from the health committee which had come before them, succinct but adequate reasons had been stated in the decision. Unfortunately such a course was not adopted in the present case.

Solicitors: Field Fisher Waterhouse; Treasury Solicitor.

What she sought was to be allowed to do work as a clinical assistant in ophthalmology at a relatively humble level. The importance of the issue might not closely equate with the importance of personal liberty, but the matter was of very real significance in her own eyes and deserved to be respected.

Her Lordship considered the details of the case and said that their Lordships were persuaded that in all cases heard by the health committee there would be a common law obligation to give at least some brief statement of the reasons which formed the basis for their decision.

Plainly the health committee was bound to carry out its functions with due regard to fairness. The first two of the grounds already mentioned would apply to decisions before the committee: the provision of a right of appeal and the judicial character of the body pointed to an obligation to give reasons.

Furthermore, in every case the subject matter would be the future right of the doctor to work as a registered practitioner, and while there might be differences between individual cases as to the significance of that from the point of view

determined by arbitration, legal proceedings or agreement, and

(ii) that the defendant was required by the said decision to pay the sum identified by the adjudicator forthwith.

Paragraph 23 of the 1998 Regulations provides: "(2) The decision of the adjudicator shall be binding on the parties, and they shall comply with it until the dispute is finally determined by legal proceedings, by arbitration ... or by agreement between them."

Miss Defia Dumaresq for the plaintiff; Mr Stephen Furst, QC and Mr Michael Bowser for the defendant.

**MJ JUSTICE DYSON** said that the plaintiff had subcontracted with the defendant under a "construction contract" within the meaning of the 1996 Act. A dispute about payment was referred to an adjudicator under the 1998 Regulations.

The adjudicator decided in favour of the plaintiff, made an order under paragraph 23(1) of Part I of the Schedule to the Regulations that the parties comply peremptorily with his decision, and gave permission under section 42 of the Arbitration Act 1996 for either party to apply to the court for an order re-

quiring compliance with the decision. The plaintiff was seeking such an order to enforce the adjudicator's decision.

It was accepted that the contract between the parties did not comply with all the requirements of section 108(1) to (4) of the 1996 Act and consequently by section 108(5) and 114(4) of the Act the adjudication provisions found in Part I of the Schedule to the Regulations would apply, having effect as implied terms of the contract.

Paragraph 23(2) of Part I of the Schedule to the Regulations provided that the decision of an adjudicator would be binding on the parties until the dispute was finally determined.

The defendant alleged that the adjudicator's decision had breached the rules of natural justice, and was therefore not a valid decision.

The defendant's primary submission was that the meaning of "decision" within section 108(1) of the 1996 Act and paragraph 23 of Part I of the Schedule to the Regulations was "a lawful and valid decision".

Therefore, where the validity of a decision had been challenged, it was not a decision which was binding or enforceable as a contractual

obligation, by virtue of paragraph 23(2), until it had been determined or agreed that the decision was valid.

In his Lordship's view, if that argument were correct it would substantially undermine the effectiveness of the adjudication scheme set up by the Regulations.

The intention of Parliament in enacting the 1996 Act had plainly been to introduce a speedy mechanism for settling disputes in construction contracts on a provisional interim basis, and for providing adjudicators' decisions to be enforced pending the final determination of such disputes.

His Lordship noted that it was very easy to challenge a decision based on an alleged breach of natural justice, and an unsuccessful party before the adjudicator would need only to make such a challenge in order to prevent the decision's enforcement.

In his Lordship's judgment, if Parliament had intended to qualify the word "decision" in some way then that could have been done. His Lordship could think of no reason why the word should not be given its plain and ordinary meaning.

An adjudicator's decision whose validity had been challenged was nevertheless a decision within the meaning of the Act and the Regulations.

The defendant had alternatively argued that the court had no power to make an order under section 42 of the Arbitration Act 1996, as modified by paragraph 24 to Part I of the Schedule to the Regulations, because, by section 42(1) that power was exercisable "unless otherwise agreed by the parties"; and a clause in the contract which referred disputes arising out of an adjudicator's decision to arbitration was such an agreement.

In his Lordship's judgment, section 42(1) contemplated an agreement expressly directed to the section 42 power, and the arbitration

clause was not such an agreement.

There had also been discussion as to whether the appropriate recourse for the plaintiff was to apply for summary judgment, or by way of application for a mandatory injunction.

In his Lordship's judgment, the High Court of Justice had the jurisdiction to grant a mandatory injunction to enforce an adjudicator's decision, but it would rarely be appropriate to grant injunctive relief to enforce an obligation on one contracting party to pay the other.

Different considerations applied where a party sought to enforce some other obligation, for example, to carry out specified work, or where the decision ordered payment of money to a third party, such as a trustee stakeholder.

The usual remedy for failure to pay in accordance with an adjudicator's decision would be to issue proceedings claiming the sum due, followed by an application for summary judgment, and in the circumstances of the case his Lordship would not exercise his discretion to grant an injunction.

Solicitors: Morgan Cole, Cardiff; Wragge & Co, Birmingham.

The critical question in *Clarke*, and in this case, was whether non-attendance might be for such a reason, and/or of such duration, regardless of abandonment or dismissal, that a claimant could no longer be treated as attending it.

The position was put beyond doubt by the amendment of the regulation. Its clear purpose was to underline the deemed continuity of full-time student status even when interrupted, for whatever reason, for as long as a complete academic year or more.

Lord Justice Thorpe delivered a dissenting judgment and Lord Justice Swinton Thomas delivered a judgment agreeing with Lord Justice Auld.

**Solicitors:** Howells, Sheffield; Solicitor, Department of Social Security.

**External year deemed to be full-time study****O'Connor v Chief Adjudication Officer and Another**

Before Lord Justice Swinton Thomas, Lord Justice Auld and Lord Justice Thorpe

Judgment March 3

A student who began a full-time university course but after failing his examinations took leave of absence for a year to re-sit his exams as an external student, was deemed to be a full-time student and therefore not entitled to income support.

The rationale for the general exclusion of full-time students of university age from recourse to income support when in need seemed to have been that they could normally be expected to rely on educational grants, or increasingly, student loans to cover the period of their full-time study, including all vacation periods.

In *Clarke* the Court of Appeal held by a majority that students who intercalated an academic year pending an intended resumption of the course were not students within regulation 6(1) and were thus able to claim income support during the intercalated periods.

The main issue in *Mr O'Connor*'s appeal was whether he was a student within regulation 6(1), as amended, when, for a full academic year, he was not attending any full-time course of study but registered as an external student.

In October 1993 Mr O'Connor began a full-time degree course at Sheffield University, which normally took three years. In his second year he failed part of his examinations.

The university agreed that he could take leave of absence for the following year and re-sit them as an external student, and resume the course the following year. He was not entitled to attend lectures during the year, to use any of the university's facilities or to dismiss himself from it...

Mr Richard Drabble, QC, for Mr O'Connor; Mr J. R. McManus for the respondents.

**LORD JUSTICE AULD** said that by regulation 10(1)(b) of the 1987 regulations a "student" was "not to be treated as available for employment" and did not therefore qualify for income support.

Paragraph (a) of the definition of "student" in regulation 6(1), both before and after its amendment in 1995 following the Court of Appeal decision in *Chief Adjudication Officer v Clarke* (*The Times* February 22, 1995; ELR 299), was a

deeming provision.

There was no uncertainty on a full-time course it should be treated as continuing to attend it, and hence remain a student, and be entitled to income support, until its last day or earlier abandonment or dismissal.

The deeming effect of the provision depended on a claimant having started a full-time course, and it was a necessary function of it that he could be treated thereafter as attending it even when he was not.

The position was clearly defined by the amendment of the regulation.

Lord Justice Evans in *Chief Adjudication Officer v Webber* (1993 1 WLR 625), construing regulation 6 before the 1995 amendment, had reservations as to the deeming effect of the regulation where the facts did not correspond with the effect deemed.

His Lordship said that the whole point of a deeming provision was that it required a fiction to be treated as fact.

There was no uncertainty on the words or purpose of the regulation; they required that a person who had started a full-time course should be treated as attending it until its last day subject to his earlier abandonment or dismissal from it, and were thus intended to cover periods of non-attendance for whatever reason so long as the person remained committed to finish the course.

The position was put beyond doubt by the amendment of the regulation. Its clear purpose was to underline the deemed continuity of full-time student status even when interrupted, for whatever reason, for as long as a complete academic year or more.

Lord Justice Thorpe delivered a dissenting judgment and Lord Justice Swinton Thomas delivered a judgment agreeing with Lord Justice Auld.

**Solicitors:** Howells, Sheffield; Solicitor, Department of Social Security.

If there was a condition precedent to the exclusion from income support, it was that the claimant should have started a full-time course, not that he was enrolled on one at the time of his claim. Abandonment meant permanent or final abandonment of the course which a claimant had started.

Mr McManus submitted that whether a course of study was full-time was determined at its start, not according to later changes prompted by events. Mr O'Connor was not entitled to recharterise his course from full-time to part-time because he failed his examinations part-way through.

His Lordship agreed that was otherwise no course would be full-time in the event of the institution running it allowing a student to intercalate a period, that would defeat the whole purpose of the deeming provision.

Unlike the course in *Webber*, the course Mr O'Connor started was a full-time three year course.

Although the university permitted him to take a year's break, it was not an option when he started the course. During his year off he had not abandoned it or been dismissed from it.

The amendment to regulation 6 was not irrational. It was important to keep in mind that the general effect of the provision and the policy behind it, namely to finance full-time higher education studies out of student loans or grants rather than social security payments and to encourage full-time students to make progress with their studies rather than spinning them out with the aid of social security.

There was not the same imperative for part-time students who, in the main, were in employment and needed to tailor their pattern and periods of studying to their work.

The fact that the general policy might produce hardship in individual cases did not make it or the subsidiary legislation implementing it irrational.

The secretary of state's concern that full-time students should attend their studies and pass their examinations, was a matter he was entitled to take into account, and clearly did in making the amendment.

Indeed, since student funding had begun to move away from grants to loans, it could support an argument that it was irrational that students who had failed their examinations should be entitled to social security benefits whereas those who had passed them had to pay their own way with borrowed money.

Lord Justice Thorpe delivered a dissenting judgment and Lord Justice Swinton Thomas delivered a judgment agreeing with Lord Justice Auld.

**Solicitors:** Howells, Sheffield; Solicitor, Department of Social Security.

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## Bargains of the week: from boating on the Broads to touring the tulip fields of The Netherlands and ten days in Nepal



A selection of last-minute holidays and travel opportunities at home, on the Continent and farther afield, many at bargain prices

## BRITISH ISLES

CITY hotels are eager to make up for missing business guests this Easter by offering special rates to tourists. In London a night's B&B at a two-star hotel costs from £29 and at a four-star from £45 with The Hotel Directory. Children stay for free in some hotels. Details: 0181-770 0123.

AT MALMAISON hotels in Glasgow, Manchester and Newcastle, two nights over Easter in a room equipped with a CD player cost £30 per couple and include use of the gym. Details: 0141-572 1000.

A STAY in a country hotel over Easter will be more expensive but good offers do exist. A two-night break with some

meals at the Old Course Hotel, St Andrews, Scotland, start at £159. Details: 01334 474371.

AN AFTERNOON of "country pursuits" plus a jazz band and children's entertainment is part of an Easter package at Wood Hall, a Georgian mansion near Wetherby, Yorkshire. Two nights will cost £199, with three costing £259 — includes B&B, dinner and tea. Details: 01937 587271.

BE WARNED! A touch of *Fawlty Towers* can be expected at the Spread Eagle Hotel in Midhurst, West Sussex, over Easter when scenes from the television comedy will be performed by professional actors. Two nights' dinner, B&B, entertainment and use of the health spa costs from £180. Details: 01730 816991.

LAKE DISTRICT walking holidays on offer before Easter include four nights' dinner and B&B at Grasmere from March 22 for £47 with Countrywide Holidays. Details: 01942 241432.

BOATING on the Broads before Easter will cost £340 a week for a four-berth cruiser with Norfolk Broads Direct, or £218 for shorter breaks. Details: 0800 9173206.

## EUROPE

ROME in peace and quiet may seem a contradiction but is on offer from Cottages to Castles. A week from March 19 in apartments in a 90-year-old house in the Monte Sacro district costs from £250, with return flights from Gatwick. Details: 01622 726883.

ANDORRA escaped the avalanches and is still available at cheap prices. Fly from Manchester on Sunday and a week's Airtours self-catering holiday costs £149 with Co-op Travelcare. If you need more time to plan, Lunn Poly offers a week from March 21 with Thomson and a flight from Manchester for £169, based on four sharing. Details: Co-op, 0541 500388; Lunn Poly Holiday Shops.

DUTCH bulb field tours remain popular, and Leger Holidays' coach trip from a choice of pick-up points in England and Wales on March 26 also includes visits to Amsterdam, Antwerp and Brussels. The weekend break, with three nights' B&B, costs £129. Details: 01709 839369.

SLEDDING, snow-hole digging and ski jumping are

among the activities in a children's week from March 27 at the Norwegian resort of Venaby. The package from Headwater costs £787 for adults and £322 for children under 12, including return flights and full board. Details: 01606 813367.

EASTER weekend breaks for singles are available from Solo's, including three nights in a variety of UK hotels from £259 and three nights in a four-star hotel in Madrid for £489, with return flights from Heathrow. Both holidays begin on April 2. Details: 0181-951 2800.

CAMPSITE on a hillside close to a sandy cove on the Costa Brava over Easter is available at bargain prices from Eurocamp. A self-drive fortnight for a family of two adults and up to four children, staying in a mobile home with all mod cons and starting on any day of the school holidays, costs from £485, including a short Channel crossing. Details: 01606 787878.

SICILY in spring is available from £409 for departures between April 5 and 30 with Belleair. The price includes return flights from Gatwick and a week's B&B in Taormina. Details: 0181-785 3266.



Classic Italy: visit Sicily's ancient sites in the spring

with Thomas Cook Holidays now costs £759 with return flights from Gatwick. Details: 01733 418450.

KERALA is becoming an increasingly popular Indian destination and you can visit the region before it becomes too busy and expensive with Sunseeker Holidays, which has departures from Gatwick on April 4 and 11. A fortnight's B&B at Sandy Beach resort within reach of the intriguing backwaters costs from £379. Details: 0181-423 3000.

NEPAL for ten days from £669 is a near-unbeatable offer from Bales Worldwide. Fly from Heathrow on May 23 and stay in Kathmandu, the medieval city of Bhadgaon and a mountain resort. Details: 01306 732738.

FINAL call for a 16-day deal in Egypt costing £625. The Beyond the Pyramids tour leaves Heathrow on Sunday and includes eight nights' camping, some in Sinai, three nights on board a felucca on the Nile and four in hotels to explore the Valley of the Kings and other sites. The trip with The Imaginative Traveller includes most meals and guide. Details: 0181-742 8612.

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In Barbados, a stylish all-inclusive resort, is available at half-price for departures between March 25 and April 1. A week

includes seven nights' camping, some in Sinai, three nights on board a felucca on the Nile and four in hotels to explore the Valley of the Kings and other sites. The trip with The Imaginative Traveller includes most meals and guide. Details: 0181-742 8612.

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THE TIMES THURSDAY MARCH 11 1999

RACING: LONG-RUNNING INVESTIGATION NEARS CONCLUSION

# Gallagher and Cochrane released without charge

BY RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

**DEAN GALLAGHER** and Ray Cochrane spoke of their relief and joy last night after being eliminated from the police's long-running race-fixing investigation. A personal nightmare, which began 14 months ago for Gallagher when he was arrested in a dawn swoop, ended in a matter of minutes at Charing Cross police station when he and Cochrane were told they would face no charges and were free to leave.

However, the pair could still face disciplinary action from the Jockey Club, which said it would "review all the information available and, having taken legal advice, determine if and when any regulatory action is appropriate under the rules of racing".

Cochrane was arrested in January this year along with Graham Bradley and Charlie Brooks. Bradley was released until next month, while

Brooks, presently in South Africa, is due to report to police in two weeks' time.

While the two jockeys were released, five men were charged yesterday with conspiracy to defraud involving an alleged attempt to dope racehorses. The alleged offence took place in March 1997.

Scotland Yard said the five — Adam Anthony Hodgson, Glen Robert Gill, Jason Ronald Lawrence Butler and John Paul Matthews — would appear at Bow Street magistrates court later this month.

Christopher Foster, the Jockey Club's executive director, said: "The Jockey Club considers the fact that some charges have now been brought at least brings this investigation a significant step nearer to conclusion."

"We are mindful of the fact that this matter is sub-justice and we will have to consider it. It is frustrating I have had

carefully what, if any, regulatory measures we should take between now and the conclusion of the criminal proceedings, when the position will be considerably clearer."

As Gallagher cracked open a bottle of champagne with his fiancée, Louis Kent, he displayed no signs of bitterness at the length of time he has been under suspicion — and he ruled out legal action against the police or the Jockey Club.

It has been a frustrating time for me over the past year or so and I have had difficult times, but I am a strong person and I have battled through it. Now I am released and obviously thrilled and delighted.

"I have always protested my innocence and I had great faith in the British justice system. I knew I would be exonerated in the end, but these things take time and it is frustrating I have had

to wait so long, but it is all over now.

"What has helped me all along is knowing I was innocent — and the support I have received from my main trainers, especially Simon Sherrard and everyone at Upstans Racing."

Gallagher, who has ridden 21 winners this season and hopes to complete a half century, added: "Everyone has been so supportive in giving me rides. They knew I would not be into anything untoward."

Cochrane said: "I am absolutely delighted and it is a big weight off my mind. It has caused a lot of stress to my family and I am glad it is all over."

After arriving at the police station along with Gallagher and waiting for about a quarter of an hour, the police told both men they had nothing further to ask them and they were free to leave. Dean was obviously delighted. He's been on bail a long time and I feel sorry for him. But now we are both free," Cochrane added.

He also ruled out legal action saying: "People are doing their jobs. If things are wrong and they need investigating, that is their job. It is just unfortunate. Now we are looking forward to getting on with our lives. I have got some very nice horses to ride — an association with James Fanshawe — and a couple of other good trainers have asked me to ride work for them."



Nick Dundee and Williamson are likely to renew their partnership in the Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup a week today

## Gold Cup awaits Nick Dundee

By CHRIS MCGRATH

EVEN his trainer and jockey may not be immune from the temptation to describe the Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup as a reckless target for Nick Dundee. But the race sponsor yesterday gave some credence to the idea, which has apparently enthused his owner, John Magnier, by introducing the Irish novice to its list at age 9-1.

The Tote also scratched Nick Dundee

from its betting on the Royal & SunAlliance Novices' Chase, on the face of it the more prudent alternative for an inexperienced horse who has never encountered a rival remotely approaching the calibre of Florida Pearl or Teeton Mill. Norman Williamson, set to forfeit his partnership with the latter, will have obvious reasons for wishing that Magnier would wait another year for the Gold Cup. Edward O'Grady, the horse's experienced trainer,

is weighing the pros and cons. "We've decided to leave it until as late as possible and that looks like Saturday. There has been no decision on where the horse runs or who rides," O'Grady agreed that "nothing has been confirmed".

Nick Dundee had been a hot favourite

Suggestions that Tony McCoy has already been lined up to replace Williamson were firmly rebuffed by the owners of Teeton Mill. Mark Gichera, spokesman for The Winning Line, said: "As far as we are concerned, Norman rides. We haven't thought about a replacement as he hasn't told us otherwise."

McCoy would be free for Teeton Mill should Unsinkable Boxer be switched to an alternative engagement at the Festival and Martin Pipe is thought to favour the SunAlliance Chase once Nick Dundee is confirmed a non-runner. For now, the Tote makes Spendid S1 favourite with the Oliver Sherwood pair, Lord Of The River and Kadou Nonnatais on 6-

To complete a typical day of pre-Cheltenham charades, Teeton Mill's stablemate, Lady Rebecca, is the outcast of the Bonusprint Stayers' Hurdle market because of suggestions that she may miss the race with a setback.

Cochrane, left, and Gallagher, centre, have been cleared, but Bradley has been rebailed

### YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

#### Bangor

Going: dryish, heavy, hardish, soft

2.20 (Sm 11 110yds ch) 1. KOBRAINT (M A French) 2-15 fav; 2. Kranos (P A P McCoy) 2-15; 3. Red (P F Maysey) 25-11. ALSO RAN: Mr J P Jones, Mr J D Clegg, Mr J D Lambez, Tote, E1, E2, DF, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8

2.30 (Sm 110yds ch) 1. HIGH ISLAND (M A French) 2-15 fav; 2. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 3. Starry (P F Maysey) 25-11; 4. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 5. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 6. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 7. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 8. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 9. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 10. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 11. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 12. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 13. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 14. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 15. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 16. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 17. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 18. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 19. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 20. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 21. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 22. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 23. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 24. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 25. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 26. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 27. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 28. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 29. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 30. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 31. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 32. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 33. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 34. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 35. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 36. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 37. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 38. Mr D Stretton, 2-15; 39. 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leads for defence

THE TIMES THURSDAY MARCH 11 1999

## RUGBY UNION

# Newcastle to reveal new board structure

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

**NEWCASTLE** Falcons will announce today the revised management structure for the club after the withdrawal last month of Cameron Hall Developments, the majority shareholder. The arrangements boost the morale not only of the Newcastle squad, which won the 1998 Allianz Dunbar Premiership, but also that of other first-division clubs, who have watched with dismay recent events at Newcastle and Richmond, whose backer, Ash-Jey Levent, is also pulling out.

David Thompson, a millionaire, who retired from Druid Management Systems two years ago, has bought the Cameron Hall holding and will chair a new board, which also includes Paul Mackings. That could prove to be a significant development, since Mackings, another millionaire businessman, has strong ties with West Hartlepool, the bottom club in the first division.

John Gray, the secretary of the Newcastle Gosforth Shareholders' Association, joins the board alongside Rob Andrew, the club's director of rugby. A special meeting of the club will be held to explain the revised arrangements to members.

Sir John Hall's intervention in rugby union 3½ years ago leaves the North East with a vibrant force. His company's withdrawal effectively writes off a £5 million investment and leaves the rugby club to fend for itself but with prime assets in the shape of its players and the base at Kingston Park.

The Rugby Football Union (RFU), whose relationships with the senior clubs have improved substantially, can expect a stiff report from Leicester after the latest round of disciplinary decisions. Leicester's rugby committee met last night in the wake of RFU decisions on Monday to suspend Austin Healey for eight weeks.

(of which three have already been served) after a "reckless" stamping incident, but to quash the white card awarded to Martin Johnson when he was sin-binned in the cup game with Richmond.

"We will be talking to the RFU on a number of fronts," Peter Wheeler, Leicester's chief executive, said.

Leicester's point is that the RFU disciplinary panel found that Johnson, the club captain and England lock, should not have been sin-binned by Steve Lander, the referee, who, as a professional official, is also now an employee of the union.

It would be a relief to England's first division clubs if Cardiff and Swansea made peace with the Welsh Rugby Union, whose general committee meets tonight to decide action to be taken for non-payment of fines imposed on the two breakaway Welsh clubs.

Only an annual meeting of the union can expel the pair, but they could be ejected from the SWALEC Cup this season.

France, beaten by Wales last Saturday, have made four changes to the squad to play against England on March 20 at Twickenham. Pascal Jordani, the uncapped Davy centre, steps up alongside Christophe Dominici and Christophe Juillet, the wing and No 8 respectively from Stade Français, and Marc de Rognement, the experienced Begles-Bordeaux hooker, Ireland, who play Scotland, have recalled Jonathan Bell and Trevor Brennan in a 23-man squad.

FRANCE SQUAD: Backs: E Nammeck, C Domini, T Longuet, X Gauthier, F Condom, J P Deneuve, C Lassalle, F Fourcade, C Calvano, S Marconnet, F Temmer, R Joubert, M de Rognement, O Amalbert, O Koenig, J P Deneuve; Front: P McQuillen, J Scully, F Fourcade, P Chene, P Wallace, J Fitzpatrick, K Wood, P Nott, P J Williams, M Givens, M Givens, M Givens, M Givens, D O'Carroll, C Costello, E Miller.

The three days of racing in Cheltenham's incomparable arena next week are the culmination of nine months of hard graft for Hammond

## Preparing a perfect party for 50,000

**T**he National Hunt Festival comes under starter's orders at Cheltenham on Tuesday and 150,000 punters are expected to visit in high spirits. For the revellers, it is a party over too quickly. The Irish, who flood the Cotswold town in their tens of thousands, pledge to return even before they have left, while the victorious let their thoughts linger in the winner's enclosure long after the horses have been led home to their stables.

A few, though, will breathe a sigh of relief when the finish line is reached. Among them, Rosemary Hammond, 56, the racecourse's club secretary since 1981. For her, the most prestigious date on the National Hunt calendar means nine months of "hard graft." There's anything that's saleable, I sell it," she said.

Indeed, every application for a badge or ticket is handled by Hammond. She sells the corporate boxes in the grandstand, chalets in the tented village, which entertain

groups of 24 people, and restaurant bookings at £400 per head. She is in contact with the trainers and owners and is on duty at the front desk on race days.

"I don't have much interest in the horses," she said, "but I do get quite excited on Gold Cup day, when 12,000 cars are out there and the folk are coming in. I feel the build-up because my side of the job is like planning a party, except you're inviting 50,000 people. Ninety per cent are here to enjoy themselves, but a few want to cause annoyance."

It seems unthinkable that anyone would want to abuse this amiable lady, but it has happened. "Things can go wrong," Hammond said. "Even if someone gets out of the car and falls in the mud, it's got to be somebody's fault. Occasionally, we have sent out the wrong badges and if the customer hasn't told us beforehand, they'll turn up and start screaming abuse before we can draw breath."

Sadly, well-heeled owners

"It amuses me and takes away the tension. They're acting out a part, a lot of them. Some are living in the past."

Demand outstrips supply on Gold Cup day, so some of the excluded public come up with ingenious scams to get in through the gates. "I can't say we've had anyone dressed as a jockey," she said, "but some without tickets try and get in by carrying a plastic bucket and sponge. We've also had people slip into the disabled area where they'll sit with a blanket round their knees until the end of the race, when they'll get up and walk off."

"Another gentleman always makes out he's blind and waves a white stick around. We know he's not blind, but no one does it as a kind of challenge. When I tell him I'm fed up with him, he wanders off like Colonel Blimp."

Hammond claims that such behaviour no longer shocks her. She does, though, feel sympathy for some. "We get some sad ladies who come with a postcard from the trainer, say-

## SARAH POTTER



and trainers are not above putting in the metaphorical boot. Ever resourceful, Hammond has a way of dealing with braying accents raised unreasonably in her direction.

"If you shut your eyes, all the wha-wha voices actually sound like ducks," she said.

ing: 'Please allow my employee. Unforunately, we don't accept those. It's sad because they work with and love the horses and don't get paid much.'

She will not, though, be bothered if the players from one particular football club never return. "The box had glass all over the floor and upturned tables," Hammond said. "When I went to check if everything was all right, the agent who'd taken their booking just said: 'The police are on their way.' Law enforcement and security cost the organisers £250,000 over the three days.

For Hammond, the best moment of the year is being on the front lawn for the finish of the Gold Cup. "It's the place to be," she said. "You can feel the ground shake as the horses approach." She once won £300 on Norton's Coin, the 1990 Gold Cup-winner, but claims not to have any favourite horses. "For me, it's the atmosphere that's addictive." Let the party begin.

## BADMINTON

# Haughton responds to the selectors

By RICHARD EATON

**COLIN HAUGHTON**, who was excluded from the England Commonwealth Games squad last year, offered a sharp response with a notable victory on the opening day of the centenary Yonex All-England championships at the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham yesterday.

Haughton built himself an excellent platform from which to launch any criticism of the selectors with a 21-15, 15-3, 15-4 victory over Abhin Gupta, of India.

It was Gupta who effectively prevented England from winning the Commonwealth silver medal when he defeated Peter Knowles, who was preferred to Haughton.

"I would have beaten him in the Commonwealth Games, too," Haughton said. "I hope now I'll be picked for the world championships in Copenhagen in May."

Haughton, from Lancashire, won despite letting slip a lead of 12-10 in the first game. He used his fitness to establish a base from which to pressurise the Indian, keeping the rallys long and fast and waiting for his opponent to make mistakes. The result will give Haughton's confidence a considerable boost and he may be able to nudge the selectors again today by reaching the third round, for, instead of meeting Peter Rasmussen, the world champion from Denmark, who has withdrawn, he meets Martin Delfs, a 19-year-old qualifier, also from Denmark, who is a part-time player and who may be tired.

Delfs played six times in the qualifying events on Tuesday followed by a win in the first round yesterday over Rehan Khan, Germany.

Earlier, Simon Archer and Joanne Goode, who reached the final of the world grand prix championships 11 days ago, almost failed at the first hurdle this time when they trailed 10-12 in the final game against Zhang Jun and Gao Ling, an unseeded pair from China, before surviving and going on to win 15-15, 15-15.

"We were really up against it and it was just a bit of mental strength which got us through," Archer said.

IRONMAN

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DRUM BRIEF

SKY CLUB

SNOW REPORTS

CLIPPER ROUND-THE-WORLD RACES

WELSH LEAGUE

ICE HOCKEY

RUGBY UNION

POOLS DIVIDENDS

CLIPPING

WORLD RACES

CLIPPING

## FOOTBALL

# Sunderland gaze down on tussle for second place

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

AS SUNDERLAND disappear into the wild blue yonder, surely destined to win the Nationwide League first division and qualify for membership of the FA Carling Premiership next season, the chase for the second automatic promotion place grows more intriguing by the match.

It seems to lie between Ipswich Town, Bradford City, Birmingham City or Bolton Wanderers, but, of that quartet, only Birmingham enhanced their chances on Tuesday night, with a 1-0 victory over Tranmere Rovers at Prenton Park. They have lost only once in 14 league outings and Michael Johnson's 46th-minute goal was enough to give them their third win in four matches. Not that Trevor Francis, the hard-to-please Birmingham manager, was particularly satisfied.

"We were dominant and the better side throughout, but the warning signs were always there," Francis said. "We dared not lack concentration and they could have punished us a couple of times. I wanted a second goal to finish it off, but just wouldn't come. Every forward had a chance to score, but, in the end, it was left to a defender to get us all three points."

Bradford's 1-0 defeat by Sunderland, who are now 12 points clear at the top, blunted their remarkable progress from 21st in September to second position. It was only their second loss in 15 league games. Ipswich also failed to make any headway when they surprisingly succumbed 3-2 to Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park, a reverse that ended a run of four successive wins.

George Burley, the Ipswich manager, remained cautiously optimistic. "We've been in the play-offs for the past two seasons and we're still capable

of going up," he said. "A lot may depend on if we can avoid injuries."

For Palace, who called in the administrators last week to sort out their tangled finances, it was a welcome respite. "I could never question the commitment and concentrated effort of the players," Steve Coppell, the Palace manager, said. "We felt the Ipswich game was a test and the result has given us a great psychological boost."

Bolton scraped a second consecutive 3-3 draw, this time against Barnsley at the Reebok Stadium, but they have not won in five matches and have conceded three goals in each of their past four games.

"When you go 2-0 up at home, it should be good enough," Colin Todd, the Bolton manager, said, "but we keep digging holes for ourselves. It's not just the defence, it's many aspects that are costing us. There's no magic formula — this is more or less the same team that put together an unbeaten run of 15 games."

At the opposite end of the division, Port Vale edged away from the relegation zone with a 4-3 victory against Norwich

City at Carrow Road, ending a run of ten successive away defeats. Ian Bogie, the midfield player, scored the winner three minutes from time. "If we keep performing like that for the rest of the season, we shouldn't have too many problems," Brian Horton, the Vale manager, said.

Oxford United's efforts to move clear of trouble received a setback when Huddersfield Town drew level in the 86th minute at the Manor Ground, when Marcus Stewart scored from the penalty spot.

The draw at Ashton Gate between Bristol City and Bury did neither any favours.

In the second division, Fulham appear to have the title wrapped up, in much the style of Sunderland. They stretched their lead over Preston North End, their nearest rivals, to nine points with a 4-0 win against Luton Town at Kenilworth Road. Luton's cause was not helped by the dismissal of Alan White in the 32nd minute.

Bournemouth maintained their unbeaten home record this season and moved above Gillingham into fourth place with a 1-0 success against Bristol Rovers, Eddie Howe scoring the goal midway through the second half. Manchester City extended their unbeaten league run to 12 matches — their best sequence for 23 years — with a 6-0 win against Burnley at Turf Moor. Shaun Goater scoring a hat-trick.

In the third division, Cambridge United stayed a point ahead of Cardiff City at the top by beating Hull City 2-0. Trevor Benjamin and Ian Ashbee scored in the last ten minutes. Cardiff kept up the chase by overcoming Brighton by the same scoreline at Priestfield Stadium. Kevin Nugent and Scott Young scoring in the first half.

Perhaps, he thought, he might follow that well-trodden path into full-time journalism or professional punditry; maybe racing, his other great sporting love, could provide an outlet. It is fair to assume, however, that as he agonised over whether he would ever be able to score goals again, the prospect of preventing them never entered his mind.

Yet twice now the 32-year-old Dubliner

has made the transition from poacher to goalkeeper to good effect. On the first occasion, when with Manchester City, he helped to secure a 2-1 victory. On the second, against Bradford City on Tuesday night, he helped Sunderland to move even closer to promotion, which only a complete loss of form can now deny them.

After a 73rd-minute injury to Thomas Sorensen, the goalkeeper, the result of a

collision with Lee Mills, Quinn, who had earlier claimed his eighteenth goal of the season, which decided the match, volunteered to deputise until the final whistle.

In truth, he had little opportunity for heroics, so competently did the defence perform. And the gesture spoke volumes for Sunderland's team spirit.

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Doubts about the fragility of Lewis's chin are not shared by Mercer, one of only two men to have met him and Holyfield. Photograph: Marc Aspland

## Mercer leans Lewis's way

HOWEVER much scorn American boxing writers pour on Lennox Lewis's chance of becoming the first British heavyweight to lift the unified world title in 100 years — or, as a New York columnist put it yesterday, "Avoid going horizontal" on "the countless Brits who will be staying up 'til dawn" — when he meets Evander Holyfield at Madison Square Garden on Saturday, Ray Mercer, the one man who should know, thinks Lewis will win.

Mercer is one of only two opponents that Lewis and Holyfield have in common and he gave them both a hard contest. In fact, three years ago at the Garden, many ring-siders thought Mercer should have been given the decision against Lewis. The two had boxed in the Olympic Games in Seoul in 1988 and both won gold medals. Mercer at heavyweight and Lewis at super-heavyweight.

Contrary to general belief, Mercer thinks that Lewis will win on a close decision. Most experts believe that if Lewis does not win in the first half, Holyfield will knock him out in the second. Speaking from his home in North Carolina, Mercer said: "Lewis will have to avoid that left hook of Holyfield. He hits me and I went down on one knee. That left he has is a monster."

Having Emanuel Steward in his corner, Mercer be-

lieves, will make all the difference for Lewis. "He has trained so many champions, Holyfield too, so he will see that Lewis is well prepared and adjusted to fighting Holyfield," Mercer said. "Lewis became a different fighter with Emanuel from what he used to be, when he just wanted to throw the big right hand. Steward worked on his jab for his fight with me and I'm sure he's been working on other things for this fight. Lewis has got a pretty good jab, I was surprised how good it was."

Even though Holyfield dropped Mercer, he rates the bout with Lewis as his toughest. "Lewis is not just big, he's strong. He was really up for the night with me and if he is seriously up for this one, it's going to be a tough fight for Evans."

"Lewis is a tremendous fighter when he is serious. If he hasn't looked too good in some fights, don't be fooled. You've got to look at the opponents. It takes the opponent to psyche you up and make you train. If you know somebody is capa-

Mercer experience

ble of kicking your butt, you will train harder."

According to Mercer, Lewis's weight — 240lb — and power can train Holyfield of his energy. But the American warned that being big has its disadvantages. "It works both ways," he said. "His body would be exposed and you

to deal with this guy's power and bulk. When he leans on you or holds you or hits you, you realize how strong he is. The only one who is stronger is Tommy Morrison. He hits like Mike Tyson."

Mercer added that Lewis's boxing should not be ignored and those who believe that he cannot fight inside are in for a surprise. "Steward had done a good job on Lewis when he fought me. He was throwing some real punches, more punches and taking the fight to me. He was really good inside. He has learnt some new punches inside, uppercuts and all, from Steward."

Surprisingly, Mercer thinks that Lewis has a good chin. There have been doubts about Lewis's punch resistance after his bouts with Oliver McCall and Shannon Briggs, but Mercer said that, while a punch from any heavy-

weight could suddenly change the course of a contest, he had not noticed any particular vulnerability to a punch. "I was hitting him with right hands and jabs at will and it didn't seem to matter. He kept coming back."

However, Mercer warned that Holyfield was a master counter-puncher and if Lewis made the slightest error, he would pay for it. "Evander is a real warrior. He throws great combinations."

"People say he is getting old, but we all said that before he fought Mike Tyson. Holyfield came out there smoking. He surprised everyone. I know he has been in wars, but he's still looking good. He can't afford to black out in this fight. It's going to take everything he's got to beat Lewis, believe me."

Since Holyfield is a counter-puncher, Mercer gives one piece of advice to Lewis — to use the feint to bring our Holyfield's counter before throwing the right hand behind the jab. "If he does that, Lewis should win," Mercer said. "I would like to see him win because I whipped him. I hope he will be man enough when he's champion to give me another shot."

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## Hide disputes the 'undisputed' label

HERBIE HIDE has repeated his attack on the world championship bout between Lennox Lewis and Evander Holyfield at Madison Square Garden on Saturday, saying that to call it a unification was a "farce".

Holyfield is the World Boxing Association (WBA) and International Boxing Federation (IBF) world champion, while Lewis holds the World Boxing Council (WBC) version of the heavyweight title.

Hide, who defends his World Boxing Organisation (WBO) crown against Orlin Norris at the Albert Hall on April 3, said: "All those people who are looking at New York this week thinking they are seeing the undisputed championship of the world have got it wrong. I am the WBO champion, so the winner has to fight me somewhere along the line. To be honest, to call it a unification is a complete farce."

"When Lennox Lewis first

retrieved his belt from the dustbin, he was desperate to unify with Tommy Morrison, then WBO champion, and then later on with Riddick Bowe, for both titles. So why is it now he chooses to ignore the belt he once craved for?"

"I can't wait to blow Norris away and then beat Vitali Klitschko, the mandatory challenger, because I can then show the world who's the best," he added.

Hide, from Norwich, had been scheduled to meet Norris in Newcastle last month, but doctors advised him to withdraw because of a skin condition.

Lewis was declared the Fighter of the Year by the WBC yesterday. José Sulaiman, the president of the WBC, said that the award was in recognition of his services to boxing and two defences of his title, against Shannon Briggs and Zeljko Mavrovic. Holyfield did not qualify for the award.

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"When Lennox Lewis first

## Ali strikes a blow for the great and the good

**Rob Hughes on a ring master who transcends sporting generations**

It has been staring us in the face throughout this already remarkable sporting week in New York. Joe DiMaggio, the father of baseball, has been taken away for burial in his home town of San Francisco this morning and this country, with its special relationship between winners and the American Dream, is one icon shorter than at the start of March.

No matter who wins, or how the contest is won between Evander Holyfield and Lennox Lewis on Saturday, there is not a hope that either man

will join the pantheon of what American society craves. One who has passed through Madison Square Garden just before the boxing circus arrived. The very word that has run through the pre-contest humbo jumbo — respect — fits that man, Muhammad Ali, like a snug coat. As he leaves the building, already with a pressing engagement, he stops instinctively. A group of small children are passing by and the face of Ali lights up.

There is that rapport that we sometimes see between old people and infants and though Ali is but 57, he has in some ways been made old by Parkinson's Syndrome. Forget, for a moment, the argument as to whether his trade has anything to do with the state of his mind: what was in his eye as he saw these children was almost a blessed look of contentment, of humour. He reached down and "shadow-boxed" with a delighted young boy and then he picked up a girl of maybe 3 years old and gently kissed her on the cheek. She, too, looked thrilled, but a moment later frightened. His hands began to tremble, just as they had done when, at the opening of the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, he lit the flame. There was dignity now, as then, in Ali, dignity fused with concern from this onlooker, at any rate.

Such a great sportsman, he is the American ideal in that he first became a winner, then a winner with presence and honour and then a retired win-

ner who maintained his standards, even in illness, so that Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, has recently honoured him with the title of unofficial peace ambassador to the world. "People like Muhammad transcended national boundaries," Annan announced.

The Greatest was at the Garden for commercial reasons. Wheaties, "the Breakfast of Champions", needed the most special athlete it could find to

launch its 75th anniversary and making the cover of the Wheaties box has, since the 1930s, always been the Mecca of recognition from the world of commerce to the champions of sport.

DiMaggio made that box ten times, although at the back. One other pugilist, Max Baer, had endorsement contracts without featuring on the coveted packet and, in the modern world, Tiger Woods is a Wheaties spokesman. Michael

In the streets around Broadway, the pace of life so frantic, the energy invigorating and yet the vacuum of a sporting great diminished, it is curious to find Ali where he was never invited in his prime.

Wheaties was understandably shy of the three-times world heavyweight champion,

who refused the draft to serve in Vietnam and who changed to Islam. Now, 30 years on, virtually unable to speak more than a few mumbled words,

the cereal company has decided that the time is right.

Jordan, the retiring basketball icon, retains the link.

But why Ali and why now?

The fact is that the United States is going through a hard time retaining the innocence, the awe of its sporting personalities. Too many of them turn out to have feet of clay, either because they disgrace their fame or because they achieve with the transience of butterflies, winning, say, the Olympics, hovering with their hand out and disappearing as instant millionaires.

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"He was with us for two hours for this launch," Greg Zimprich, a company spokesman, enthused. "You cannot imagine the charisma that he still has."

Watching all this, caring for her man and wife of the surrounding media, Ali's wife, Lonnie, hears him say: "I'm not fast, but I'm still pretty." She smiles, she has heard it all so many times.

And it is she who recognises the enduring acclaim. "I think Muhammad probably plays a role for a lot of athletes, in how to act once they have left the arena,"

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And it is she who recognises the enduring acclaim. "I think Muhammad probably plays a role for a lot of athletes, in how to act once they have left the arena,"

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&lt;p

# Athletes passing breath test



Curbishley, one of several leading athletes seeking to improve her performances on the track, tries out the Powerbreath equipment at Birmingham University

In massive volumes of physical work, weight training and ultimately, performance enhancing drugs.

Now and then, a sportsman would remind us of the forgotten power in the lungs. Emil Zatopek, the greatest of all Olympic distance runners, was a ceaseless experimenter on his own body. As a young soldier, he would see how long he could hold his breath, believing that this could increase his lung capacity. Once, doing this on sentry duty, he keeled over, unconscious.

The emphasis on lung power was scoffed at in the post-war period, when acknowledged experts decided that the path to sporting perfection lay

Herb Elliot, from Australia, who was never defeated over the mile, used breathing techniques taught by Percy Cerutty, his eccentric coach. These included an alarming procedure known as tidal breathing.

Cerutty's theories were the result of his own experience. "Because of my defective lungs when I contracted double pneumonia," he said, "I just had to learn to breathe deeper and completely fill my lungs. I found that running in the orthodox fashion limited my stride and prevented me

from fully filling my lungs."

More recently, we have seen footballers, runners and sportsmen all over the place displaying ridiculous nose-strips, reinforced plasters that are supposed to dilate the nostrils so that the competitor can take in more air through the nose.

The Powerbreath dumbbell for the lungs has considerably more scientific backing and credibility. It has been developed by Dr Alison McConnell, a physiology lecturer and founding director of the Human Performance and

Sports Medicine Unit at Birmingham University. A former international rower, McConnell and her team carried out intensive trials on elite athletes using the device and claim that it can improve performance by almost 30 per cent.

"We previously believed that the breathing muscles were not a limiting factor in exercise," McConnell said, "but the fact that training the respiratory muscles is possible could have important implications for sport."

Initially, the research explored ways of alleviating breathlessness in older people and it was so successful that the experiment was extended to a group of healthy young people using cycle ergometers. "After four weeks, we found that the time the sub-

## Cyclists are queuing up to get their lips round it'

jects could sustain on the ergometers before they became exhausted increased by about 20 per cent, which is a fairly impressive improvement," McConnell said.

The Powerbreath is a small plastic device that looks like a cross between a snorkel and a Ventolin inhaler. You breathe through the mouthpiece with your nose firmly sealed off with a nose-clip.

The training advice suggests that you use it for a few minutes twice a day. You breathe in against a controlled and adjustable resistance and the theory is that the muscles controlling the taking in of breath will be overloaded and grow stronger. It is now being marketed through sporting magazines and sells for just under £50.

As word of it gets around, McConnell believes that we may not be far away from the time when there will be a Powerbreath in every sportsman's kitbag. When you consider some of the sinister performance-enhancing aids that all too often lurk in such bags these days, the inclusion of a simple drug-free dumbbell for the lungs would surely be a welcome breath of fresh air.

JOHN BRYANT

## TODAY'S FIXTURES

### FOOTBALL

Kick-off 7.30 unless stated

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Challenge Cup: Third-round replay: Coventry Bay v Droylsden

HYDE LEAGUE: Second division: Winton and Bonnyford, Paisley; Stalybridge and Oldham v Chesham.

PONTIN'S LEAGUE: Premier division: Stoke v Luton; Newcastle Town, 7.0

SHERIFF FISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Newry v Glentoran.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE: Southern: Buntington St Mary's v Bracke Sports, London Colney v Watfarn Abbey; New Backet St Peter v Beaconsfield Synchro; Challenge Trophy: Buntington St Mary's v Holme Green, Buntington v Pollard, Bury.

INTERLINK EXPRESS MIDLAND INVITATIONAL CUP: Fourth round: Bandon v Halewood H.

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Badminton League: Greater London League v Manchester City, 7.0

HOCKEY: Men's representative match (in Portsmouth, 11.0); Army v Civil Service

ICE HOCKEY: Group E: Ayr Scottish Eagles v Newcastle Rockhounds, 7.30.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 47

WOBEGONG

(b) A brown carpet shark with buff markings. *Orectolobus maculatus*, found off the coast of Australia. The Aboriginal name. "Wobegongs add to their camouflage by growing fronds that look like seaweed on their faces."

SEMANG

(c) (A member of a Negrito people inhabiting the interior of the Malay peninsula. Also *Samang*. The Malay word. "For practical purposes a Semang is a nomadic primitive Peninsular Negrito whose numerical system stops at two."

SUNYATA

(d) The concept of the essential emptiness of all things and of ultimate reality as a void beyond worldly phenomena. The Sanskrit word for emptiness, non-existence. *Sunyata* means empty, void. "Sunyata is what is left behind after an endless series of negations, and is therefore the most positive and fundamental of ideas."

TSANTSAS

(a) A human head shrunk as a trophy by the Jivaro of Ecuador. The Jivaro word. "The finished tsantsa is about the size of the head of a small monkey, and preserves strikingly the human expression."

SOLUTION TO WINNING MOVE

Solutions: 1 Rx7+; Rx7 (1 - Kxf7 2 Nxd6+ wins the black queen and White retains a huge attack) 2 Qxd6+ Ke8 3 Nfc3 checkmate.

2000 Cell You and Yours: 0870 010 0644 Consumer justice programme, presented by Peter White

328 Radio 4 Appeal Norman Bowler speaks on behalf of RCPBA, a charity dedicated to providing an education for Tibet's poorest children (r)

330 Shorelines Portrait of the island of Foula, used by the Army to test its weaponry (r)

346 This Scorpion tale Anna Massey narrates part 49 of the history of Britain (r)

## A proud industry ravaged

Fred Dibnah's Industrial Age. BBC2, 8pm (England) 7.30pm (Wales)

The statistic are mind-boggling: in 1947 there were three quarters of a million miners in this country. In 1984, just before the miners' strike, there were 200,000. Today, in Fred's speak, "the industry is practically, nearly all gone". The fierce, close communities which grew up round the pits, with their wonderful galas and horrific tragedies (in Wales a miner was killed every six hours) are gone, too. The dismantled pits — and some that have been lovingly restored — stand forlorn and majestic in ravaged landscapes. The dauntless Dibnah descends one shaft to see ghostly models of the workers (including children) some 1,500ft below ground and admires a bank of eight huge Lancashire boilers which drove the steam hoists. "It's rather sad and eerie in the raw. And somebody's nicked the water gauge..."

Horizon New Star in Orbit. BBC2, 9.30pm

For years now Americans have been pouring vast fortunes into the ISS (International Space Station). Last year they actually got the first bits of it into orbit. When it's finished it will be big enough to be seen from Earth — but will it really have been worth the phenomenal risks and costs involved? It will take several hundred hours of space walks and almost 100 flights over five years finally to assemble this monster. It's already weathered 15 years of planning and 34 redesigns just to get the first components off the drawing board. And yet, as Nasa admits in this programme, much of its life-support equipment is still untested. Filmed in America and Russia, this film charts ISS's extraordinary history.

Dispatches Channel 4, 9.30pm

The subtitle of this report could almost be "Dr Arpad Puszai, Hero or Villain?" The scientist, now constrained by a gagging clause, first raised the alarm about genetically modified foods last year — and was promptly sacked from his research institute. He had pioneered the use of a certain gene in food which further research suggested could be harmful to human health. When he fed rats with a genetically modified potato, their immune systems rapidly deteriorated and their brains shrank. If one GM potato could cause such problems, what about other GM foods on the market?

Playing the Field BBC1, 9.35pm

One of the most taut and credible slices of domestic drama this year comes in tonight's edition of *Ken Loach's* new series about a female football team. *McLennan Hill* is an award-winning performance as Rita makes the grave mistake of telling her husband John (James Nesbitt) that, in a drunken moment, she had made love to her ex (John McAdie). Women will sympathise with her anger and her very grown-up, but sadly misplaced desire to be honest with the man she and their small son love. Sounds saucy on paper, perhaps, but this scene is a genuine heartstopper. There are also fun-and-games sub-plots when Jo is found in flagrante with Ryan. Elizabeth Cowley



Ralph Ineson as the hopelessly romantic Luke in Playing the Field (BBC1, 9.35pm)

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RADIO CHOICE

The Longest Radio Show in the World — Every Radio 1, 9am

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Crossing Continents Radio 4, 11am

I sense that "name three Belgians" has faded from the top ten of dinner party games but it retains its novelty, and apparently there are people who will raise an argument over whether Editorial characters such as Hercule Poirot qualify: aren't people funny? Belgian's profile is about to be raised by staging the European football championships next year, but *Crossing Continents* today is about dementia. The Belgians' football landscape is hundreds of young African players have been brought to the country's top clubs with promises of fame, but most do not live up to expectations, with the result that they are tossed out by the clubs without even the funds to get home, leaving them adrift and often homeless. Peter Barnard

RADIO 1 (BBC)

5.30am Zoo Ball 9.00 The Longest Radio Show in the World — Every Radio 1, 9am

12.00pm Breakfast 9.00 The Big Boys Breakfast 9.00 Scott Chisholm & Sally James 12.00 Justice With Jacobs 12.00 Annastacia Palaszuk 4.00 Dave Pearce 5.45 Newsbeat 6.00 Dave Pearce 8.00 May Anne Hobbs 10.00 John Peel 12.00 Andy Kershaw 2.00am Dave Warren 4.00 Longest Radio Show in the World — Every

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.30 Ken Bruce 12.00 Jimmy Young 2.00am Ed Stewart 5.00 Johnnie Walker 7.00 David Allan 8.00 Paul Jones 8.00 Blues request 9.00 Punt and Dennis 10.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (5/6) 8.30 Radio 2 Bed Week (7/8) 9.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (8/9) 10.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (9/10) 11.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (10/11) 12.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (11/12) 1.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (12/13) 2.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (13/14) 3.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (14/15) 4.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (15/16) 5.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (16/17) 6.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (17/18) 7.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (18/19) 8.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (19/20) 9.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (20/21) 10.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (21/22) 11.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (22/23) 12.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (23/24) 1.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (24/25) 2.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (25/26) 3.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (26/27) 4.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (27/28) 5.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (28/29) 6.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (29/30) 7.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (30/31) 8.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (31/32) 9.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (32/33) 10.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (33/34) 11.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (34/35) 12.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (35/36) 1.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (36/37) 2.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (37/38) 3.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (38/39) 4.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (39/40) 5.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (40/41) 6.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (41/42) 7.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (42/43) 8.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (43/44) 9.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (44/45) 10.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (45/46) 11.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (46/47) 12.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (47/48) 1.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (48/49) 2.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (49/50) 3.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (50/51) 4.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (51/52) 5.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (52/53) 6.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (53/54) 7.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (54/55) 8.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (55/56) 9.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (56/57) 10.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (57/58) 11.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (58/59) 12.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (59/60) 1.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (60/61) 2.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (61/62) 3.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (62/63) 4.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (63/64) 5.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (64/65) 6.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (65/66) 7.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (66/67) 8.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (67/68) 9.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (68/69) 10.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (69/70) 11.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (70/71) 12.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (71/72) 1.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (72/73) 2.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (73/74) 3.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (74/75) 4.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (75/76) 5.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (76/77) 6.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (77/78) 7.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (78/79) 8.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (79/80) 9.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (80/81) 10.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (81/82) 11.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (82/83) 12.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (83/84) 1.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (84/85) 2.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (85/86) 3.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (86/87) 4.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (87/88) 5.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (88/89) 6.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (89/90) 7.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (90/91) 8.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (91/92) 9.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (92/93) 10.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (93/94) 11.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (94/95) 12.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (95/96) 1.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (96/97) 2.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (97/98) 3.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (98/99) 4.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (99/00) 5.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (00/01) 6.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (01/02) 7.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (02/03) 8.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (03/04) 9.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (04/05) 10.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (05/06) 11.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (06/07) 12.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (07/08) 1.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (08/09) 2.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (09/10) 3.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (10/11) 4.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (11/12) 5.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (12/13) 6.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (13/14) 7.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (14/15) 8.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (15/16) 9.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (16/17) 10.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (17/18) 11.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (18/19) 12.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (19/20) 1.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (20/21) 2.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (21/22) 3.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (22/23) 4.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (23/24) 5.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (24/25) 6.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (25/26) 7.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (26/27) 8.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (27/28) 9.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (28/29) 10.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (29/30) 11.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (30/31) 12.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (31/32) 1.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (32/33) 2.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (33/34) 3.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (34/35) 4.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (35/36) 5.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (36/37) 6.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (37/38) 7.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (38/39) 8.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (39/40) 9.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (40/41) 10.00 Radio 2 Bed Week (41/42) 11.0

# Stuck between a rock and a "coffee" shop

**E**ven a quarter of a century after metrication in Britain, nobody really gets the hang of grams and kilos until they start getting involved in drugs in a big way. It's an early warning system for schoolteachers: when the boy who used to be the most mathematically confused pupil in his head, you know that he's doing a lot more than homework in his spare time.

Of course, nobody did too much about all this until drug-taking spread beyond poor districts of America and Europe to become a middle class pastime. As Richard Pryor pointed out, people only started calling drug-taking an epidemic when "white folks started doing it". Then it got so bad that Europe's leaders got together to find a solution to the problem.

The solution they hit upon was Amsterdam. They reckoned that by making one city a haven for

recreational drug use, the problem could be geographically contained. In return for shouldering this burden, the Dutch Government probably receives secret payments, the same way other nations earn money reprocessing more timid countries' nuclear waste.

And whenever Amsterdam's junkie population looks like swelling, other nations party to the secret agreement we presumably obliged to broadcast propaganda documentaries showing just how grim being a smackhead can be.

How else can we explain Amsterdam's last night's TV damage? For BBC2's *Modern Times*, it looked like a stylish, government-sponsored film designed to portray the dismal consequences of decimalising drugs.

Whatever the British Government is paying Amsterdam to lure these expatriate Brits away from England, it is not enough. Patsi, in particular, was scarcely unaware of

just how unentertaining she is after seeing this film a prisoner, given a choice between a year's solitary confinement and a week sharing a cell with Patsi, would unquestionably choose the former.

In her more cogent moments Patsi — who arrived in Amsterdam a couple of decades ago — bores everyone with her hymns to the "honeypot" city: you can grow dope in your windowbox, cocaine's cheap, booze is available around the clock, and, as one unemployed Brit explained, social security runs to at least £500 a month, further enhanced by rent subsidies and gifts.

But in her pharmacologically enhanced moments Patsi enters a still more fevered state of delirium in which she believes herself to be a novelist and nags publishers to read her work. Actually, Patsi does have a way with words. But it's not a way that would interest a purist in verse.

## REVIEW

**Joe Joseph**



isher unless he was looking for a title that would generate a large tax loss. Delusions of literary competence are a common by-product of drug or alcohol abuse, but few cocaine addicts have their efforts exposed to such a large television audience for ridicule. They're all at Patsi's friend Dawn, who fled to Amsterdam 18 years ago to escape a philandering husband has taken refuge in verse.

Dawn spent four years in jail after being caught smuggling drugs which she doesn't feel too bad about, because — get this — "I never smuggled anything that I didn't use myself", which must be why burglars get so naked when they're done for stealing TVs, something they watch every day.

But did she get sloppy, or did she deliberately try to get caught, having decided that a prison sentence would be the easiest way to escape Patsi's company for a long stretch of time? Dawn thinks of herself as a louts-eater. But now Dawn's son Kris, who has also become trapped by what Dawn calls the "spider's web" that is Amsterdam. He'd like to crawl out of the web, but he's now stuck, too: "You've had a belly full of beer, and a nose full of coke. You dream about what you want to do, rather than actually physically doing it."

Gilt baubles from Cabouchon seem to be the cocaine of Britain's

middle-class. According to Trouble at *The Top* (BBC2), when the company went bust last year, it had an annual turnover of £140 million and 250,000 distributors (which is what they call dealers in the costume-jewellery world).

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Reardon used this instrument on *Looking Good* (BBC2) to convey to a not-spaghetti-thin 40-year-old who wore tight black mini-skirts, ankle boots, and applied her make-up with a palette knife, that walking in public wearing every piece of chunky gold jewellery she owned gave her a very high tari rating.

But hang on: all the Cabouchon saleswomen we saw also walked around dangling more shiny baubles than a Christmas tree, presumably hoping to be stopped by admiring passers-by keen to place an order. This is presumably what is known in jewellery world jargon, as looking "completely stoned". It's pretty much like the Amsterdam version, only there's obviously a lot more gilt involved.

BBC1
6.00am <i>Business Breakfast</i> (50094)
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (T) (72053)
9.00 <i>Kilroy</i> (T) (2691459)
9.45 <i>Wipeout</i> (106184)
10.10 <i>The Vanessa Show</i> (T) (758089)
10.55 <i>News Weather</i> (T) (513388)
11.00 <i>Change That</i> (314362)
11.25 <i>Can't Cook? Won't Cook?</i> (T) (3113121)
11.35 <i>News Weather</i> (T) (7008459)
12.00 <i>Call My Bluff</i> (37072)
12.30pm <i>Top Tip Challenge</i> (T) (4674817)
12.55 <i>The Weather Show</i> (T) (5371681)
1.00 <i>One O'Clock News</i> (T) (75140)
1.30 <i>Regional News Weather</i> (59830492)
1.40 <i>Neighbours</i> (T) (7070850)
2.05 <i>Ironside Police drama</i> (T) (5991695)
2.55 <i>Through the Keyhole</i> (T) (5918530)
3.25 <i>Children's BBC: Playdays</i> (537429)
3.45 <i>Pocket Dragon</i> (5182343) 3.55
Anthony Art (861225) 4.10 <i>The All New Poppy Show</i> (6064169) 4.20 <i>Home Farm Twins</i> (5800091) 4.35 <i>Short Change</i> (3111695) 5.00 <i>Newround</i> (4876121) 5.10 <i>Grange Hill</i> (9570508)
5.33 <i>Rewind</i> (T) (19938)
5.35 <i>Neighbours</i> (T) (585879)
6.00 <i>Six O'Clock News; Weather</i> (T) (459)
6.30 <i>Regional News Magazine</i> (411)
7.00 <i>Watchdog</i> with Anne Robinson
<i>Consumer Investigations</i> (T) (25059)
7.30 <i>EastEnders</i> Baby Liam's christening day down (T) (985)



Melinda Ziegler as Jane and Nick Berry as Mike (8pm)

8.00 <i>Harbour Lights</i> Mike misses a dinner date with Melanie and she storms off leaving Jane to explain (T) (809169)
8.50 <i>Points of View</i> Readers' opinions on recent programmes (T) (279492)
9.00 <i>Nine O'Clock News; Regional News; Weather</i> (T) (5817)
9.30 <i>Budget Response</i> By Malcolm Bruce, Liberal Democrat Treasury Spokesman (T) (653324)
9.35 <i>Playing the Field</i> Shezza asks for time to consider Luke's impulsive proposal (T) (286256)
10.25 <i>They Think It's All Over Again</i> With guest Chris Eubank and Arthur Smith (T) (871850)
10.55 <i>Question Time</i> Topical debate from Manchester (T) (506879)
11.55 <i>A Loss of Innocence</i> (1986) Premieres A successful plan returns to the Mormon community where they grew up, only to face suspicion and resentment. Directed by Graeme Clifford (335275)
1.25am <i>Horizon</i> (1291473)
1.30 BBC News 24 (584983)

5.55-7.00 <i>Budget Broadcast</i> (571237) 10.55 <i>The Greedy Poll</i> (526905) 11.25 <i>Question Time</i> (T) (10617) 12.25am <i>Film: A Loss of Innocence</i> (5911183) 1.55 <i>News</i> (T) (1434305) 2.00-6.00 BBC News 24 (3847763)
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**9.00-10.00** *Budget Broadcast* (571237) 10.55 *Question Time* (T) (10617) 12.25am *Film: A Loss of Innocence* (5911183) 1.55 *News* (T) (1434305) 2.00-6.00 BBC News 24 (3847763)

**10.30-11.30** *Horizon* (1291473)

**11.30-12.30** *Cover Me* (5185225) 1.05 *Terror of Megachopper* (1979)

1.20am *Despatch Box* (11168)

1.30am *BBC Learning Zone: Open University: News and the Democratic Agenda* 1.10 France 3 1.20 Life's Way of Life 2.00 Further Education Key Stage 2 2.30 Teaching Film and Maths Is It Any Good? 3.00 Reading Movies 5.00 Teacher Training Teaching Today Special 5.45 Open University: The World of the Dragon 5.10 Forest Futures

**7.30pm** Fred Dibnah's *Industrial Age* (T) (287) 8.00-8.30 *A Welsh Hero* (36) (5959)

8.30-10.00 *Turning Points* (511985) 10.25-10.30 *Budget Broadcast* (61066)

BBC2
7.00am <i>Children's BBC: Breakfast Show</i> ; <i>Pingu</i> 7.05 <i>Teletubbies</i> 7.30 <i>Snorks</i> 7.50 8.00 <i>GMTV</i> (5652617)
9.25 <i>Trisha</i> (T) (2691459)
10.10 <i>The Vanessa Show</i> (T) (758089)
10.55 <i>News Weather</i> (T) (513388)
11.00 <i>Change That</i> (314362)
11.25 <i>Can't Cook? Won't Cook?</i> (T) (3113121)
11.35 <i>News Weather</i> (T) (7008459)
12.30pm <i>Top Tip Challenge</i> (T) (4674817)
12.55 <i>The Weather Show</i> (T) (5371681)
1.00 <i>One O'Clock News</i> (T) (75140)
1.30 <i>Regional News Magazine</i> (411)
2.00 <i>Neighbours</i> (T) (7070850)
2.35 <i>Through the Keyhole</i> (T) (5918530)
3.25 <i>Children's BBC: Playdays</i> (537429)
3.45 <i>Pocket Dragon</i> (5182343) 3.55
Anthony Art (861225) 4.10 <i>The All New Poppy Show</i> (6064169) 4.20 <i>Home Farm Twins</i> (5800091) 4.35 <i>Short Change</i> (3111695) 5.00 <i>Newround</i> (4876121) 5.10 <i>Grange Hill</i> (9570508)
5.33 <i>Rewind</i> (T) (19938)
5.35 <i>Neighbours</i> (T) (585879)
6.00 <i>Six O'Clock News; Weather</i> (T) (459)
6.30 <i>Regional News Magazine</i> (411)
7.00 <i>Watchdog</i> with Anne Robinson
<i>Consumer Investigations</i> (T) (25059)
7.30 <i>EastEnders</i> Baby Liam's christening day down (T) (985)

8.00pm <i>An artist's impression of the deployment part of the ISS</i> (9.30pm)
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**9.30** *CHIC* Horizon The launch of the first stages of the International Space Station (T) (285527)

10.20 *Tales of Tools* (4/6) (T) (367362)

10.30 *Budget Response* By the Liberal Democrats: In-vision subtitles (T) (83633)

10.35 *Newsnight* (T) (218904)

11.20 *Late Review* Jackson Pollock at the Tate Gallery in London (454279)

11.35 *Skiing Forecast* (527965)

12.00 *Despatch Box* (11168)

12.30am *BBC Learning Zone: Open University: News and the Democratic Agenda* 1.10 France 3 1.20 Life's Way of Life 2.00 Further Education Key Stage 2 2.30 Teaching Film and Maths Is It Any Good? 3.00 Reading Movies 5.00 Teacher Training Teaching Today Special 5.45 Open University: The World of the Dragon 5.10 Forest Futures

**7.30pm** Fred Dibnah's *Industrial Age* (T) (287) 8.00-8.30 *A Welsh Hero* (36) (5959)

8.30-10.00 *Turning Points* (511985) 10.25-10.30 *Budget Broadcast* (61066)

**10.30-11.30** *Horizon* (1291473)

**11.30-12.30** *Cover Me* (5185225) 1.05 *Terror of Megachopper* (1979)

1.20am *Despatch Box* (11168)

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**SARAH POTTER 47**

Laying down the party line at the Cheltenham Festival

# SPORT

THURSDAY MARCH 11 1999

**BOXING 49**

Lewis gets vote of confidence from unlikely ally

**Champions set to spring to life**

## Arsenal plan for another march on title

By MATT DICKINSON

IN THE dressing-rooms where they make such calculations — namely at Old Trafford, Highbury and Stamford Bridge — there is an accepted wisdom that six defeats are as many as a championship winner can sustain. "This season it may be even fewer than that," Tony Adams believes, but he can afford to. Arsenal may not lose again this year.

The prospect of the champions sprinting for the FA Carling Premiership tape at the same blistering pace as last year began to swirl around Highbury on Tuesday night in the aftermath of the 3-0 victory over Sheffield Wednesday. March 11 was the launch date for ten consecutive league triumphs last season and, once again, Arsenal look ready to burst into spring bloom.

They protest otherwise, insisting that they are four points behind Manchester United, that they have no games in hand and that they did not have to ward off a secondary threat from Chelsea last time. "We are in a weaker position than last year," Dennis Bergkamp said and, statistically speaking, he is right. But when the Dutchman declared that Arsenal's form was not good enough, it seemed that he was protesting too much. They may be failing to overwhelm weaker opponents, but it is realistic to speculate that they might not lose another game this season — which is probably just as well, given the competition.

With ten matches left, Arsenal's hardest tests are trips to Leeds United and Tottenham Hotspur, where George Graham will relish the chance to pull the welcome mat from under their feet. But, with Emmanuel Petit returning from an ankle injury on Tuesday, the championship-winning

side is available again for the first time in more than a month and this time they have attacking reinforcements to draw on.

If Bergkamp and Nicolas Anelka were struggling last year, plan B was Christopher Wreh.

On Tuesday night, Wenger could turn first to Kaby Diawara, a winger who bulldozes past full backs with deceptive speed, and Kanu,

who makes his £4.5 million fee look more ridiculous with every flick and feint.

**TITLE RUN-IN****MANCHESTER UNITED**

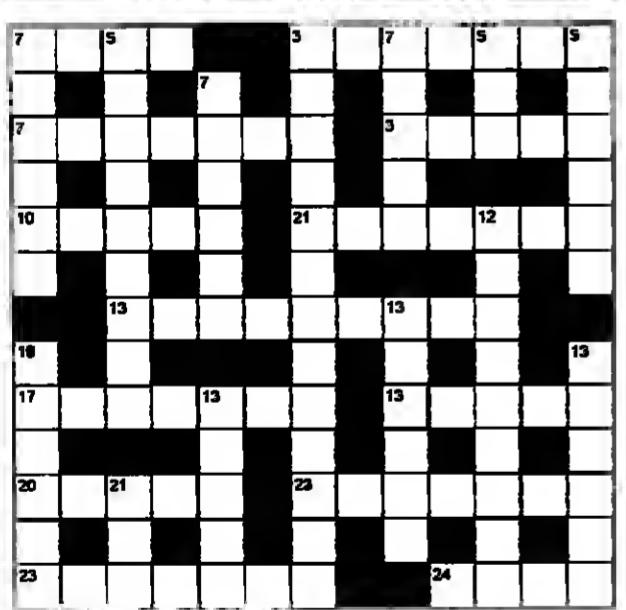
Mar 13	Newcastle	A
Mar 20	Everton	H
Apr 3	Wimbledon	A
Apr 10	Blackburn	A
Apr 17	Sheff Wed	H
Apr 25	Leeds	A
May 1	Aston Villa	H
May 8	Middlesbrough	A
May 16	Tottenham	H
TBA	Liverpool	A

**ARSENAL**

Mar 13	Everton	A
Mar 20	Coventry	H
Apr 3	Southampton	A
Apr 6	Blackburn	H
Apr 10	Tottenham	A
Apr 19	Wimbledon	H
Apr 24	Middlesbrough	A
May 1	Derby	H
May 8	Leeds	A
May 16	Aston Villa	H

**CHESSEA**

Mar 13	West Ham	H
Mar 21	Aston Villa	A
Apr 3	Charlton	A
Apr 5	Leeds	H
Apr 10	Wimbledon	A
Apr 18	Leicester	H
Apr 25	Sheff Wed	A
May 1	Everton	H
May 8	Tottenham	A
May 16	Derby	H
TBA	Middlesbrough	A

**TIMES TWO CROSSWORD**

No 1662

**ACROSS**  
1 Regular solid: piece of sugar (4)  
3 A veg: chariot (anag) (7)  
8 Of pivotal importance (7)  
9 Nothing certain, but death and these (P.B. Franklin) (5)  
10 Show plant: young Pooter (5)  
11 Get nearer; (weather) deteriorate (5.2)  
13 International game (4,5)  
17 The reindeer (7)  
19 Path to take (5)  
20 Jewish teacher (5)  
22 About to come (7)  
23 Six-sided figure (7)  
24 Paradise garden (4)

**DOWNS**  
1 Squawk of hen: raucous laugh (6)  
2 Influenza-sailing flag (4,5)  
3 The Eucharist (4,9)  
4 Proportion (5)  
5 One steering oarsmen (3)  
6 Herbal infusion (6)  
7 Evil spirits (6)  
12 Spent (9)  
14 Prospered (6)  
15 Burnt with heat (6)  
16 Flush with eg shame (6)  
18 An entity, creature (5)  
21 Fight: container (3)

**SOLUTION TO NO 1661**  
**ACROSS:** 6 Pressie, 7 H-bomb, 9 Sated, 10 Monsoon, 11 Fan vaulting, 14 Hard as nails, 17 Riot Act, 19 Betel, 21 Bagel, 22 Victory.  
**DOWN:** 1 Vest, 2 Sardinia, 3 Hermia, 4 Thin, 5 Polonius, 6 Pest, 8 Benign, 11 Furlough, 12 Laid-back, 13 Cherub, 15 Native, 16 Play, 18 Ally, 20 Troy

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## Williamson may lose big-race ride

By CHRIS MCGRATH

NORMAN WILLIAMSON is likely to have to give up the ride on Teeton Mill, the highest-rated chaser in Great Britain, to partner the Irish-trained novice, Nick Dundee, in the Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup next Thursday.

Nick Dundee had been expected to run in another race at the Festival, but, while connections remain undecided in public, they are believed to have agreed yesterday that the horse should be thrown in at the deep end for the Gold Cup. Williamson,

though mightily impressed by Nick Dundee, was hoping that he would instead contest the Royal & SunAlliance Chase, restricted to novices the day before the Gold Cup.

McCoy normally rides for Martin Pipe, but he may not be needed by the champion trainer in the Gold Cup. For the time being, connections of Teeton Mill are insisting that, as far as they are concerned, Williamson will ride their horse.

He has partnered Teeton Mill to each of the four wins that have elevated the grey through the ranks at a dramatic rate this season. Building on their success with a light weight in the autumn's big handicap chase the Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup, they have produced equally flamboyant displays in level-weight championship company, notably in the Pertemps King George VI Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day.

With each giant stride taken by Teeton Mill, interest has intensified in his Cheltenham showdown with Florida Pearl, the Irish champion. Their encounter looks likely to produce the best Gold Cup for many years. Yet Williamson appears poised to observe their clash from Nick Dundee, who has looked a horse of great potential but must bridge a huge gulf in both form and experience.

## New sponsor for Scottish football

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

THE Scottish Premier League (SPL) yesterday unveiled the Bank of Scotland as its new sponsor in a deal running from now until at least the end of the 2000-01 season. The contract is worth an initial £2.25 million, with the option of a further £1.5 million for a third full season.

From yesterday, the division is to be known as the Bank of Scotland Scottish Premier League. The contract is the most lucrative of its kind to be signed in Scotland.

The deal ends several months of negotiations for a title sponsor for the SPL and comes with the clubs having only ten games remaining of their first season since breaking away from the Scottish Football League.

Roger Mitchell, the SPL chief executive, said: "The sponsorship represents a significant investment on Bank of Scotland's part and the agreement is a real expression of confidence in the SPL."

"We view this as the end of phase one. A lot of people doubted us, but we have delivered a seamless change in the highest-profile sports event in this country. Our primary objective is to create a brighter future for Scottish football and the business partnership we have entered into today is an important part of that."

Jim Farry, the deposed Scottish Football Association (SFA) chief executive, said yesterday that he believes his future now lies outside the game. Farry is still disputing his dismissal and considering legal advice over whether to appeal, after losing the post he held for nine years.

"My feeling is that it's been hard enough for my family over the past few days without putting them through another couple of years of this. Anyone who knows me, though, knows of my belief in justice and that I would want the truth to be known."

"But the last thing my family would want is for me to become an obsessive old man with long fingernails, worrying my life away about a long, drawn-out court case."

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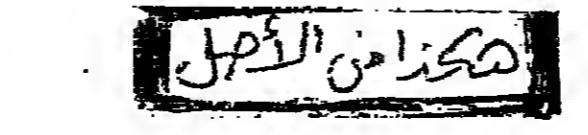
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Williamson: likely switch

Jockeys released, page 45



Lasse Kjus, of Norway, was in breathtaking form on the Sierra Nevada course in Spain yesterday as he moved closer to winning the World Cup overall title by taking the downhill final to put himself 42 points clear of another Norwegian, Kjetil Andre Aamodt. Photograph: Alessandro Trovati

